Encyclopaedia of Indian History

ANCIENT • MEDIEVAL • MODERN

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(VOLUME II)

by

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Preface

The four-volume publication *Encyclopaedia of Indian History* has caught the imagination of the readers The growing popularity of these books among the post-graduate students and researches in the history of India is evidenced by the ever increasing correspondence of the editor with them as also by the challenge of press review from scholars from various parts of the country The editor highly appreciate comments on and critical evaluation of this books by those interested in the subject, he always bears in mind their valuable suggestion for qualitative improvement of the material wherever necessary

We are passing through a very serious socio-cultural and national crisis today The rising tide of fundamentalism, regional and parochial outlook, and the racial and linguistic controversies threaten the very fabric of composite Indian culture and the concept of secular nation-state, evolved laboriously by one of our ancestors—Akbar, The Great, and so fondly cherished by the modern Indian leadership This book does not have a direct bearing on all these aspects, nevertheless, it may provide, in historical perspective, an insight into the causes and remedies of some of these problems to the readers.

A brief resume on the survey of sources, which

precedes the text in all of the four volumes of this study by way of an introduction, may give an idea to the scholars of history, particularly the subject-specialists, of the deep involvement of the author in the field of his study and research As a matter of fact, it reveals but a tip of the iceberg of the source-material on Indian history which the editor has built over the last twenty-five years

Editor

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Religious Movements

An attempt has been made in the foregoing pages of this study to illustrate, in historic perspective and on sound academic considerations, how the era of conflict between the two sociocultural forces, variously styled as 'hindu' and 'muslim' or 'indigenous' and 'exotic', was quickly overtaken by the forces of social stability and healthy interaction between the two in the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, thus giving birth to the Indo-Muslim society The part played by the sultans of Delhi towards the socio-cultural advancement and economic progress of their subjects has been critically examined in chapter four Growth and development of education and learning, constituted the foundation on which the superstructure of the Indo-Muslim society and culture was raised by intellectual giants and patriotic scholars like Amir Khusrau, whereas, the architectural monuments of the sultans, were a manifestation of the healthy synthesis which had started taking place between the two apparently diverse 'hindu' and 'muslim' or 'indigenous' and 'exotic' cultural traditions Of course, religion played a predominant role in the medieval Indian society, and something concrete in this specific domain, was also needed to bridge the gulf between the two communities at the socio-cultural levels The saints and scholars of both the communities were conscious of this fact, and, before long, there emerged from among their ranks, *bhakti* reformers and *sufi* saints, who took up the

cause of socio-religious reforms and preached the gospels of Equality of all Mankind Universal Brotherhood, and Hindu-Muslim Unity, in the local dialects and regional languages which could be easily understood by the Indian masses Neither the Bhakti Movement nor Sufism owed their origin to Medieval India, nor did either of the two stand to propagate any extraordinary or new religious beliefs and dogmas to their followers Instead, both of them carried on their campaigns well within the frameworks of their respective religions, Hinduism and Islam, with the twofold objective (a) to curb the exploitative and superstitious elements and factors in their religions, and (b) to mould the social lives of their followers in conformity with the principles of 'equality of mankind' and universal brotherhood' with emphasis on *hindu-muslim unity* It is only in this sense that the role of the *bhakti reformers* and *sufi saints* can be better understood and appreciated, that is why, the author has used the words 'Religion as a Social Force' by way of in introduction to the study of these two religious reform movements ,

The bhakti movement

The devotional worship of God with the ultimate object of attaining *moksha* or salvation is called *bhakti* The cult of *bhakti* is as old as the Indian religious tradition going back to the prehistoric times of the Indus Valley Civilisation and Culture The latter provides us with the earliest evidences of the worship of *Shiva Pashupati* seated in meditation, surrounded by animals We find mention of *bhakti* in the Vedas, Upanishads, the Epics and the Puranas The *Vedanta* or the Vedic religious philosophy, based primarily on the Upanishads, deals with the philosophical aspect of the religious beliefs and practices of the Indo-Aryans as distinct from its ritualistic and superficial forms It

attempts to resolve the mysteries of creation and explore the meaning and purpose of human life through metaphysical speculations The Vedanta or the Upanishads which act as its feeders, do not present any single or consistent system of philosophy, they contain many a philosophic thought, opinion and metaphysical concept put forth by a galaxy of sages (*rishis*), scholars and spiritual thinkers, some of whose speculations are diametrically opposed to each other Nevertheless, the crux of the Vedanta philosophy is the concept of the Creator and the Creation, God (*Brahman or Paramatman*) and Soul (*Atman*), it revolves round two basic principles—the doctrine of rebirth or transmigration of the soul, and the theory of *karma* or 'law of the deeds' The relationship between Soul and God is like the one which exists between a part and the whole, between a drop of water and the ocean Man is mortal but the soul is immortal, bring a part and parcel of God, its ultimate object is to seek reunion with the latter and become one with God This is what is meant by salvation (variously termed as *mukti, moksh* or *nirvana*) or liberation from the cycle of births and rebirths

The Vedanta suggests three ways for the attainment of salvation, referred to as *gyan-marg, karma-marg,* and *bhakti-marg* respectively The *gyan marg* lays stress on the acquisition of True Knowledge or Enlightenment as a means to the attainment of *mukti, Sankhya Darshan* of Kapila of recommends this method The *karma marg,* as recommended by Lord Krishna to his disciple Arjuna in the *Bhagwadgita,* calls for selfless or disinterested action (*karmayoga*) for this purpose, whereas, the *bhakti marg* suggests the devotional worship of God to be the easiest method to win His favours and seek reunion with Him after death Devotional worship of God pre-supposes the

omnipotence of the Creator, complete surrender to Him by the devotee and the worship of God to be the easiest method to win His favours and seek reunion with Him after death Devotional worship of God presuppose the omnipotence of the Creator, complete surrender to Him by the devotee, and worship of God by means or noble deeds and meditation, including the chanting of His name through relationship between God and man, as between the master and the slave, husband, and wife or the beloved and the lover

Gyan-marg is the most difficult to adopt, very I few sages with extraordinary Godly virtues and qualities of head and heart may retreat from this materialistic world as *sanyasis,* and be successful in acquiring True Knowledge or Enlightenment , The *karma-yoga* may be successfully adopted by some people of integrity and virtue with high moral character while performing their household duties with an attitude of absolute disinterestedness or non-attachment The *karmayogis* attend to the worldly affairs apparently as ordinary men of the world though, in their hearts of hearts, they are far beyond the reach of any considerations of personal gain, worldly temptations and feelings of victory or defeat, pleasure or pain They perform their *swadharma* selflessly and fearlessly without any attachment to men, matters and things An ideal example may be cited of Arjuna who performed his duty as a perfect *karmayogi* at Kurukshetra in the great battle of Mahabharata

The cult of *bhakti* took its birth in the form of a movement in the Tamil country sometime in the sixth century as a reaction against the growing tide of Buddhism and Jainism It flourished in south India for about three centuries through its two well-defined wings, Saivism and Vaisnavism The exponents of Siva

worship were called collectively as Nayanars (viz, the leaders) while those of Vishnu became known as *Alvars*

Sankaracharya

Sankaracharya, a Nambudiri brahmin from the Malabar and originally a worshipper of Siva, gave an entirely new turn to the hindu revival movement by providing it with a solid philosophical background through the reinterpretation of ancient Indian scriptures, particularly the Upanishads, Sankara advocated the philosophy of Advaita—the Monism of the Vedanta' by giving a brilliant exposition to the entire range of the Vedic religious and spiritual thought Having lost his father in his childhood, Sankara (it was his assumed name) became a *sanyasi* (an ascetic) while in his teens and began to roam about in search of true knowledge and wisdom A genius by birth and intensely religious by outlook and social heritage, Sankara received instruction in religious scriptures and philosophic speculations at Kashi (mod Varanasi), one of his teachers was said to be Govinda *Yogi* Sankaracharya started a vigorous campaign for the revival of Hinduism as a living and progressive faith, based on the solid foundations of the Vedic philosophy and ancient Indian cultural traditions In order to combat Buddhism and Jainism, he reorganised the ascetic order of sanyasis on the pattern of the Buddhist Sangha and launched an incessant campaign for the propagation and popularisation of Hinduism He founded a number of *mathas* (monasteries) in different parts of India to highlight the cultural unity of India, they included among others, the *mathas* of Jagannatha Puri in the east, Sringeri in the south, Dwaraka in the west and Badrinatha in the north Sankaracharya breathed his last at Kedarnath at the young age of thirty-two but,

before his death, his name had already become a household word throughout the length and breadth of the country As a result of the vigorous and well-organised campaign launched by him, millions of dissenters from Hinduism again returned to its fold Sankaracharya has rightly been called the saviour of modern Hinduism, he was also the founding father of the Bhakti Movement which found its way into the medieval period Nevertheless, he laid stress on gyan or jnana—'the true knowledge' as a means to the attainment of salvation It was good as an ideal but not practicable for an average man, that is why, the succeeding preachers of the Vedanta philosophy substituted it by the *bhakti marg* 'to attract popular mind' and make Hinduism a more dynamic force

The cult of bhakti, to begin with, bad essentially a religious fervour, it was because the main theme of the teachings of its exponents was faith in One God and devotion to Him through either of the three suggested paths for the attainment of salvation, it was actually named as Ekantika Dharma—'the religion of single-mindedness' for a long time Sankaracharya gave it the form of a cultural movement which stood for the revival and glorification of the ancient Indian cultural traditions The cult of bhakti assumed the form of a reformative movement in the medieval period when a number of holy men and scholar saints took up the cause of socio-religious reforms among the people, in quick succession, in various parts of the country

The causes of the rapid spread of the Bhakti Movement and its popularity in medieval India are not far to seek Degeneration of Hindu religion and social structure were obviously the primary causes By the efforts of Sankaracharya and others, Buddhism and Jainism received a setback and supremacy of the Brahmanic faith was restored It implied *ipso facto*,

the dominance of the priestly class among the brahmins over the entire religious organisation of the hindus As religion played the premier role in all walks of their life, the supremacy of brahmins in the sociocultural, political and even economic fields was complete Their hold over the hindu society was further strengthened during the rajput period

Many of the rajput chiefs and their nobility, particularly the erstwhile foreign immigrants and aborigines, owed their recognition as rajputras or kshatriyas to the magnanimity of the brahmin priests who granted them a superior social status among the people As the readers are aware, the caste system had already disrupted the social unity of the hindus It had been accorded religious sanction particularly since, the days of Manu

In the ninth and tenth centuries, the brahmins came forward as caste-makers in a big way when they be an to confer high-castes on the militant Indianised foreigners It further strengthened their hold over the people as their sociocultural leaders Subsequently, the defeat of the rajputs at the hands of the turkish invaders and the decline of their power in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, actually left the brahmins as the only saviours of the ancient Indian religion and culture They rendered a yeoman's service to Hinduism in this regard but, while doing so, badly crippled the other two high castes—*kshatriyas* and vaisyas Alberuni tells us that the vaisyas were treated just like sudras in the beginning of the eleventh century R C Dutt opines that the kshatriyas still held their own as long as India was a fret country, but lost their glory and independence after the twelfth century And then the bold myth was proclaimed that the kshatriyas too as a caste had, like the vaisyas, ceased to exist Obviously, such myths were floated by the brahmins

deliberately to frighten the hindu masses into abject submission so that they could exploit their services as best as they could

The caste system was made still more rigid and the evil of untouchability practised with a vengeance The sudras constituted the bulk of the society Alberuni lists eight antyaja castes below the status of the sudras, they were 'the weaver, the shoemaker, the juggler, the basket-maker, the sailor, the fisherman, the hunter of wild animals, and the blacksmith' All those who did not fit into any of the above-mentioned castes were simply classed as the outcastes or the chandalas Needless to say the high-caste people exploited the low castes and heaped all sorts of insults upon them Even the states discriminated between the citizens on the basis of caste Alberuni informs us that the punishment for a brahmin who murdered a man of another caste was 'expiation, consisting of fasting, prayers and almsgiving', if he killed another brahmin, 'the punishment was banishment and confiscation of property' In no case was a brahmin offender punished with death which was a common penalty imposed upon the sudras and the outcastes even in cases involving theft In matters of taxation also the brahmins enjoyed the same indulgence as in punishment for offences, they were exempt from all taxes

The actual services rendered by the brahmin priests in return for the above-mentioned privileges enjoyed by them, were rather of negative character Alberuni, who had carefully studied hindu religious philosophy and institutions, found no difficulty in marking out the three deities of the hindu Trinity and the true monistic philosophy of the Upanishads that lay behind it "The existence of God", he writes, "they consider as real existence, because everything that exists through Him" Alberuni is, however, shocked to

observe that this noble faith' had become the exclusive property of the educated few' ' and that 'the common people' were referred to idols and temples, to unmeaning rites and unhealthy restrictions' In disgust,, he asks the question, "Why should the people be led on poison in a land where the nectar stream of an ancient and lifegiving religion flows perennial? Once the simple and straightforward Vedic religion had given place to orthodox beliefs, complex rites and rituals, superstitions, hoaxes and affection primarily because of' the gross negligence and selfishness of the brahmin priests They observed studied silence over the degenerating religious practices and deliberately distorted or misinterpreted the old religious scriptures with the object of fleecing the devotees and befooling the poor and innocent people

By the beginning of the fifteenth century, according to an observation, 'the springs of religion had been choked up by the weeds of unmeaning ceremonials, debasing superstitions, the selfishness of the priests and the indifference of the people Form had supplanted the reality, and the highly spiritual character of Hinduism bad been buried under the ostentatious paraphernalia of sects " The hindu society as a whole was diseased The social atmosphere was so sickening that it depressed and demoralised even the most intelligent and well-to-do householders It so appeared that the whole society had been held to ransom by the self-seeking and fanatical priests Such a sorry state of affairs could not go unchallenged for a long time Slowly and steadily, the lower castes began to show signs of discontent against the exploitative tendencies of the higher castes It acted as an eye-opener to some educated persons, religious-minded saints and critics belonging to various sections of the society who, one after another, jumped into the field to

stem the rot before it was too late Most of them were either ascetics, by conviction without any worldly encumbrances, or had to adopt an ascetic life, may be for a short while to fight for socio-religious reforms as missionaries They raised their voice of protest against the falsehood that prevailed in the name of Hindu religion, denounced caste system, and pointed an accusing finger towards the brahmin priests who were primarily responsible for all that muddle As the roots of all the social and religious evils lay in their religious order, the work of reforms could also be taken up effectively on the religious plane Hence it was that all those wise men, who were eager to restore the health of the sick hindu society, had to assume the robes of religious preachers and ascetics for the success of their mission They boldly demanded reforms in the society and at the same time set an example through their own high moral character and ideal way of living for emulation by their followers These ascetics and scholar saints devoted their lives in the service of their fellow-brethren, and the success of each in his mission was in direct proportion to the respect that he commanded from his followers as their guru or religious teacher Through their untiring efforts, the cult of bhakti was transformed into a forceful reform movement which engulfed the whole of the country

The second major factor, which gave an impetus to the Bhakti Movement was the advent of Islam and the establishment of muslim rule in India Islam opposed to Hinduism in more respects than one, being exotic in character, it posed a serious danger to the ancient Indian sociocultural traditions The muslim preachers as well as their rulers were equally pledged to convert the dar ul harb of India into *dar ul Islam* by all means Therefore, the establishment of the muslim rule put the very existence of Hinduism and hindu

social order in jeopardy At this critical moment, some of the intelligent and religious-minded leaders, be longing to all castes and social strata of the hindus, realised that unless radical reforms were brought about in their religious and social set up they would be knocked out by Islam before long This apprehension added an element of urgency to the reform movement Moreover, Islam had already earned a worldwide reputation for its cardinal principles regarding its religious philosophy and social organisation Its bold and direct approach to the concept of One God, opposition to idol-worship, equality of all (the *faithful,* at least) were bound to attract the oppressed and downtrodden hindu masses Hence, one of the objectives of the bhakti reformers was to halt conversions to Islam by setting their own house in order, they thus used the bhakti movement as a defensive weapon to the rising tide of Islam

According to some critics, the bhakti movement was based on an attitude of escapism from the bitter realities of life They hold that, with the establishment of the muslim rule, the hindus not only lost their political independence but also suffered from numerous political, religious and economic disabilities They were classed as zimmis and deprived of full-fledged citizenship of the state There is some force in the argument that as they 'could not pursue careers of material, political and cultural advancement under the stiffling and intolerant alien rule of the medieval sultanas they sought a solace in bhakti, following the dictum, 'what cannot be cured must be endured', they were advised by their preceptors to feel contented with whatever they had

In spite of its monistic philosophy and the revolutionary principles of social equality and brotherhood, Islam did not become popular as a

revolutionary creed in India Unfortunately it was because of the historic factors which led to the establishment of the muslim rule in the country The destruction and devastation wrought by the marauders of Mahmud of Ghazni in the name of Islam did an incalculable harm to their revolutionary creed, and the humiliation suffered by the hindus at the hands of the invaders was remembered long by them with bitterness

The policy of persecution as adopted by the sultans of Delhi towards their hindu subjects in the thirteenth century further added to their hatred towards Islam Therefore, in spite of the discrimination and exploitation suffered by the hindu masses at the hands of their own high-caste people, Islam was never treated as an alternative to or welcome substitute for Hinduism even by the lowest of the lowly The credit for the pacification of their injured sentiments towards Islam and muslims goes primarily to the muslim mystics or sufi saints It were they who initiated the forces for bringing about reconciliation between the hindus and muslims The bhakti reformers reciprocated the noble gesture of the sufis and were influenced by them in adopting the principles of universal brotherhood and hindu-muslim unity, particularly in the sixteenth century Thereafter, the bhakti reformers and the sufi saints moved hand in glove with each other for the establishment of harmonious relationships between the two communities This, however, does not confirm the hypothesis as erroneously put forth by some of the modern writers that the Bhakti Movement was largely an outcome of the positive Islamic impact on the Indian society

Each of the bhakti reformers carried on his missionary work in his own original or individualistic

style Very often, his field of work or the circle of devotees was also confined to certain regions or parts of the country Therefore, it is not surprising to find that the teachings of the bhakti reformers sometimes showed differences in the contents and the methods of approach adopted by them for the eradication of the socio-religious evils Nevertheless, it is not difficult to draw a fairly comprehensive list of their general teachings which may be considered under two headings, the positive teachings and the negative ones

The positive teachings of the bhakti reformers revolved round the two cardinal principles (a) unflinching faith in the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient One God, and (b) devotional worship of God for the attainment of salvation The concept of salvation, which was, in turn, based on the two fundamental doctrines of rebirth or transmigration of soul and karma was taken for granted In the third place, all the bhakti reformers laid stress on the importance of a guru or the spiritual guide who could help the devotees in the attainment of their objectives Only a true teacher who had himself risen above the personal vices and worldly temptations, and experienced the divine knowledge in the path or the bhakti marg could impart spiritual instruction to his followers and lead them from darkness to light The adoption of a living guru, a person of flesh and blood, was thus considered indispensable as a means towards the attainment of salvation Many of the prominent preachers themselves assumed the role of gurus and were recognised as such by their devotees Fourthly moral education was an essential part of the teachings of the bhakti reformers, high moral character and the virtuous living were prerequisites of those who wanted to receive baptism from the guru Complete self-surrender or total dedication to God was considered

indispensable for the attainment of spiritual knowledge and divine bliss Every devotee was expected to suppress his ego, personal desires, sensuous pleasures and other worldly temptations, and devote himself to the worship of God in thought, word and deed Fifthly, the bhakti reformers believed in the equality of all mankind and advocated the development of fellow-feeling among the people As all the human beings were the children of the same Almighty Father, everyone should love the other irrespective of his caste, colour and creed Love of mankind was the true devotion to God

The negative teachings of the *bhakti* reformers were as important as the positive ones Being revolutionary reformers, most of them campaigned vigorously against the deep-rooted socio-religious evils and met with tough opposition from the vested interests who did not see eye to eye with them They refused to accept the supremacy of the *brahmin* priests who considered themselves to be the custodians of all religious knowledge and institutions, and who were primarily responsible for the decline and degeneration of the hindu society Some of the reformers challenged the sanctity of ancient Indian scriptures and Sanskrit language which had become unintelligible to the masses All of them preached in the local dialects and spoken languages of the people which could be easily understood by them This helped in the rapid spread of the Bhakti Movement throughout the length and breadth of the country The *bhakti* reformers condemned idol-worship, superstitious beliefs and practices and meaningless rituals, including the conduct of *yajnas* and pilgrimages to the holy places of worship They led a vigorous attack on the tantric rites and other hoaxes played upon the poor and ignorant masses by the self-seeking and crafty priests The

bhakti reformers did not wrangle over the metaphysical abstractions or delve deep into the philosophical matters Instead, they were essentially eclectic and broad-minded in their views and, outlook They believed in the equality of all human beings and fostered fellow-feeling among untouchability Many of the reformers themselves belonged to the lower castes and their teachings were meant both for the high-castes and low, rich and poor, educated and uneducated Their message had a popular appeal

The second great exponent of the Bhakti Movement, after Sankaracharya, was *Ramanuja* (1017-1137) who hailed from modern Andhra Pradesh, some of the writers assign him the first position as the founding father of the movement because, strictly speaking, it was he who showed preference to bhakti over gyan as the principal means of attaining salvation A vaisnava by faith, Ramanuja received training in the Vedanta from his teacher Yadava Prakasa of Kanchipuram who belonged to the school, of Sankaracharya Ramanuja differed with some of the philosophic aspects of Sankara's theory such as the concepts universe being an illusion (*maya*) and absolute monism, as deduced by him from the Upanishads Ramanuja redefined the Vedanta philosophy by laying greater stress on devotional worship to a personal God who constituted the Supreme Reality He emphasised that God was the Supreme Creator, Destroyer and Preserver of the universe, and the soul, though a part and parcel of the same divine force, was yet distinct from it, in his words, the soul, though of the same substance as God's and emitted from Him rather than created, can obtain bliss not in absorption but in existence near Him In other words, Ramanuja suggested the existence of dualism within the monistic philosophy of the

/edanta A great scholar and widely travelled man, Ramanuja wrote a number of books and treatises on he bhakti cult, including Vedanta Sanghmaha, and he commentaries on Brahmasutras and the 3hagwadgita Unlike Sankaracharya, Ramanuja was 'ery liberal in his social outlook, and he broke the aste barriers in his teachings He attained national ame as a bhakti reformer in his lifetime and made nore than 10,000 disciples through his personal ontact with them before his death at the ripe old age f 120

Nimbarkara, a young contemporary of Ramanuja rom the south, established his ashram at Braja, near Mathura and preached the gospel of dedication to God, personified by Krishna and Radha, his cult proved very popular with the commonfolk in the Gangetic Valley Madhvacharya, a vaisnative from south India, who lourished in the thirteenth century, wrote as many as hirty-seven works on vaisnavism especially dealing vith the cult of bhakti based on the concept of lualism as distinct from the monistic philosophy of Sankaracharya According to Madhvacharya, the iniverse could be divided into two parts—*swatantra* or ndependent being' and *aswatantra* or 'the dependent being', the former included the omnipotent, omnipresent and omniscient God Alone while the atter comprised matter and the souls Nevertheless, hese intricate matters of philosophic speculations vere not the concern of his disciples who aspired to ittain salvation through devotional worship of God inder his stewardship

The first prominent preacher of the Bhakti Movement, born and bred in northern India, was Ramananda, with him the centre of gravity of the novement shifted from the south to the Gangetic valley A brahmin of the Kanyakubja parents of

Prayag, Ramananda received his higher education in Hindu religious philosophy at Varanasi and joined the school of Ramanuja as a preacher Soon afterwards, he set up his own independent sect based on the doctrine of devotional worship to Rama and Sita He vehemently opposed the supremacy of brahmin, (his own kinsmen) to be the sole custodians of Hindu religion and made disciples, from among the sudras and the low castes although he could not do away with the caste prejudices altogether Ramananda adopted Hindi, then the spoken language of the people in the Gangetic valley, as his medium of expression for the spread of the Bhakti Movement, and thus rendered a great service to the development of that language He was the first bhakti reformer to throw open the gates of divine worship to the women and made disciples from among them Twelve of his disciples rose into prominence after his death and carried his message from door to door, they included among others, Dhana (a Jat), Sena (a barber), Rai Das (a cobbler) and two women named Padmavati and Surasari

Kabir (c 1440-1510), the most popular of all the disciples of Ramananda, occupies a place of pride in the annals of the Bhakti Movement in northern India It is said that he was the son of a hindu widow who, to hide her shame, left him immediately after his birth, by the side of a water tank in Benaras He was picked up by a muslim weaver named Niru who brought him up as his own on Kabir married and adopted the profession of his Godfather but, being a man of sober and serious mood, he spent most of his time in solitude and meditation He was initiated into the bhakti cult by Ramananda

The entry of Kabir into the fold of the Bhakti Movement proved most fruitful in bringing about reconciliation between the hindus and muslims With

filial attachment to both the religious communities, Kabir was free from religious prejudice against either He rubbed shoulders with bhakti reformers as well as the sufi saints Though intensely religious in outlook, he was not a slave of either Hinduism or Islam He was a man of absolutely independent thoughts and boldly criticised the evils of both the religions, Kabir addressed mixed gatherings, consisting of hindus and muslims and made disciples from both He denounced the brahmins and the mullas alike to be the sole custodians of their religious orders and took them to task for their orthodox and exploitative attitude He refused to accept the sanctity of Vedas as well as Quran to be 'the revealed scriptures'

Kabir believed in the Oneness of God, irrespective of the names by which the human beings addressed Him He had full faith in the hindu doctrines of rebirth and karma and stood for purity of life, complete self-surrender to God and His devotional worship for the attainment of mukti Kabir vehemently opposed the idol-worship, caste, system and untouchability as practised by the hindus and simultaneously coademned the orthodoxy and the meaningless rituals of the muslims He exposed the futility of offering five daily prayers in the mosque without the purity of heart and sincere dedication to God Kabir laid stress on religious toleration and taught a lesson of brotherhood to hindus and muslims He was one of the most outstanding bhakti reformers who did their best to bring the hindus and muslims close to each other in all walks of life Kabir raised his voice against the custom of sati and child-marriage, the two evils which were purely social in character Kabir was not in favour of renouncing the world and going to forests or hills in search of true knowledge or salvation, instead, he advised his followers to earn

their livelihood by the sweat of their brow and perform all the duties as householders while leading an honest, noble and dedicated life Kabir's teachings were in perfect harmony with the social and religious needs of the times, he identified himself completely with the concept of an integrated Indian society and won the hearts of millions His dohas and popular sayings of revolutionary social import are widely known and have become a part and parcel of the medieval Indian cultural heritage After his death, the followers of Kabir, both hindus and muslims, became known as Kabirpanthis The devotees as well as the priesthood of the *Kabirpanth* retain their distinct identity up till this day

Guru Nanak (1469-1538), a young contemporary of Kabir, who took up the cause of socio-religious reforms in the Punjab, proved to be the most celebrated of all the bhakti reformers of medieval India His teachings were identical with those of Kabir albeit Nanak was more revolutionary than the latter in his line of approach, and, in the long run, his efforts proved much more fruitful than those of all the other bhakti reformers Born at Talwandi, modern Nankana Sahib (Pakistan) in 1469 of the Mehta Khatri (old Kshatriya) parents—Kalu Ram and Tripta Devi, Nanak grew up, to be a man of contemplative nature, free from all the worldly temptations and common vices of the age Married to Sulakhani, daughter of Moolraj Khatri of Batala, he fathered two sons, Sri Chand and Lakshmi Chand, and was employed in the state granary at Sultanpur Lodhi in 1594 when he received enlightenment Nanak turned a sanyasi, though temporarily, and initiated the Bhakti Movement in northwestern India In five rounds of travels, called udasis, covering a period of more than thirty years, Guru Nanak carried the message of divine worship to

every nook and corner of the country besides Ceylon and the muslim places of pilgrimage at Mecca and Medina His teachings were in conformity with all the positive tenets or the Bhakti Movement as mentioned above, with the additional credit that, like Kabir, he also advocated householders life for his devotees, this revolutionary concept was taken by him to the logical conclusion when he emphasised that it was possible and also desirable for the men of God, on their way to the attainment of salvation, to live as honest breadearners and householders just as lotus follower survives with untainted character in the midst of the muddy water Towards the fag-end of his life he set up his, dehra (akin to the mathas of Sankaracharya or khanqahs or the sufi saints) at Kartarpur on the bank of the Ravi and allowed his family to rejoin him, he took up to plough to set the example of an ideal householder Guru Nanak adopted 'universal brotherhood, a concept or the, sufi saints, to be his own slogan and championed the cause or hindu-muslim unity He introduced community lunch (langar) at his dehra as a practical step to eradicate the evils of caste discrimination and untouchability from among his followers As a crowning victory to the mission of Guru Nanak may be mentioned the institution or guru-ship envisaged by him for the continuous propagation of his teachings, during his lifetime he appointed, on spiritual merit, one of his disciples, Bhai Lehna (Angad), in preference to his own sons, as his successor From 1538 to 1708 A D , as many as nine divines adorned 'the spiritual throne'of Guru Nanak This revolutionary step led to the birth of Sikhism as a separate religion and the ultimate transformation of Sikhs into the soldier-saints

The Bhakti Movement ran its full course in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries and its echoes were

heard right upto the middle of the seventeenth century Among the other bhakti reformers, mention may be made of Vallabhacharya, born in a Telugu brahmin family of south India in 1479, who set up his ashram at Benaras and spread the Krishna cult in the Gangetic valley Mira Bai (1498-1546) was the most notable of all the bhakti reformers from among the women A rajput princess of Merta, she was married to Rana Sanga's eldest son and heir-apparent prince Bhojraja in 1516 A D The latter died a premature death in the lifetime of his father and Mira Bai became a widow To add to her miseries, her father lost his life in the historic battle of Khanna (or Khanwa) in 1527 while fighting on behalf of Rana Sanga, and the latter breathed his last a brokenhearted man soon afterwards Unable to bear the strain of the miserable, worldly life, Mira turned an ascetic and adopted the bhakti cult She preached the worship of God in the name of Krishna A scholar of Hindi and Sanskrit, she was a born poet whose devotional songs and lyrics constitute a rich cultural heritage of the sixteenth century India, these earned her the title of 'the goddess of Gita style of poetry The concluding years of her life were spent at Dvarka her entry into the Bhakti Movement carried the message of divine worship to almost every hindu household

Chaitanya Mahaprabhu (1486-1533), born of a brahmin family from Nadia, was the most famous bhakti reformer in Bengal He became an ascetic at the age of twenty-five and adopted the Krishna cult He stayed at Mathura and Vrindabana for many years and attracted lakhs of devotees Deadly opposed to caste system and untouchability, Chaitanya was 'the very image of love' whose heart 'melted with pity' to observe the sufferings of the poor and the down-trodden He was very popular in Bengal, so much so

that some of his devotees declared him to be the incarnation of Lord Vishnu or Krishna himself

The credit for bringing about socio-religious revolution in Maharashtra goes to the Bhakti Movement led by Nam Dev, Tuka Ram, and Ram Das Nam Dev (1270-1350), a tailor by professional caste, rose to be the first prominent bhakti reformer in Maharashtra He boldly challenged the supremacy of brahmin priests in Hindu religion, opposed idol worship and caste system and created an atmosphere of mutual love and fellow-feeling among the marathas Nam Dev made disciples from all castes and classes His teachings were in conformity with most of the positive and negative tenets of the Bhakti Movement as explained earlier, he advocated devotional worship of God by the name of Hari Tuka Ram (1601-1649), who flourished in Maharashtra in the first half of the seventeenth century, was a sudra by birth He took up to asceticism while in his teens and led a life of piety and service, He struck a serious blow at the caste structure and helped the people in building a homogeneous society in Maharashtra Tuka Ram also worked for the hindu-muslim unity and earned the gratitude of Shivaji, the rising star of Maharashtra Swami Ram Das (1608-1681) was the revered teacher of Shivaji who provided a moral and spiritual background to the rising power of the marathas in the seventeenth century, he inculcated the spirit of nationalism among them Shivaji as well as his mother Jijabai were both the disciples of Swami Ram Das whose cult of Parmartha and the general philosophy of life finds mention in his own monumental work, entitled Dasabodha

The cult of bhakti assumed the form of a widespread mass movement towards the close of the fourteenth century when the sultanate of Delhi was on

the way out It was essentially an indigenous movement which involved all sections and castes of the hindus It did not owe its origin or popularity to Islam although it was influenced to some extent by the mystic philosophy of the sufis

The Bhakti Movement achieved its declared objectives to a considerable extent It rejuvenated Hinduism by striking a serious blow at he predominance of the brahmin priesthood in the society, the ground lost by the brahmins in the field of Hindu religion could never be regained by them thereafter It restored the confidence of the masses in their religious and sociocultural heritage and stopped conversions to Islam on a large scale The citadel of caste system could not be broken albeit its evil effects were minimised by the development of harmonious relationships and free social intercourse between the high-caste and low-caste hindus The numerous social evils from which the hindus, suffered could not be eradicated altogether nevertheless, when thoroughly exposed and condemned, they tended to subside and take the hind seat in the moral conscience of the people The Bhakti Movement laid, stress on the finer values of life and thereby improved the general moral tone of the society as a whole The Bhakti Movement marked the end of an era of oppression of the hindus under the muslim rulers because it gave them moral courage to face the hardships with contentment and cheerfulness The bhakti reformers and the sufi saints, individually as well as collectively, helped in the creation of an atmosphere of brotherhood and fellow-feelings between the hindus and muslims and strengthened the hands of the Mughal Emperors in adopting a policy of complete religious toleration, the Bhakti Movement paved the way for the transformation of 'a muslim rule' to a national

government' under Akbar the Great The movement gave an impetus to the forces of national integration and synthesis between the so-called hindu and muslim cultures or the indigenous and exotic cultural traditions

Some of the side-effects or aftereffects of the Bhakti Movement are also noteworthy Much of the credit for the development of vernacular languages, including Tamil, Telugu, Hindi, Punjabi, Bengali and Marathi goes to the bhakti reformers who carried on their campaign in the local dialects and spoken languages of the people The theme of bhakti enriched the literary stock of these languages too because it provided a new line of thought and expression to the Indian scholars who were otherwise not involved in the movement as preachers For instance, the two notable scholar saints, Sur Das and Tulsi Das made an invaluable contribution towards the enrichment of Hindi literature in the second half of the sixteenth and first quarter of the seventeenth century, the detailed account of which has been given at an appropriate place in this study The Bhakti Movement gave an impetus to the rise of the marathas under the leadership of Shivaji And last but not least, the birth of Sikhism in the Punjab was the direct outcome of the Bhakti Movement which had been launched in the Punjab by Guru Nanak in 1594 A D

Sufism in India

Mysticism constitutes but an indispensable part of every religion in the world, with the natural religions based on the evolution of human culture and thought, such as Hinduism, it began According to a third definition with the beginning, whereas, in the case of created religions, such as Christianity and Islam, it emerged as a schism against the institutionalised or

dogmatic creeds The Islamic, mysticism, known as Tasawwuf or Sufism, was as old as Islam itself, it was, no doubt, 'born in the bosom of Islam It is said that during the very life time of Hazarat Muhammad there were, some men of virtue, and of retiring nature who embraced Islam with pleasure but showed laxity in the observation of its ritualistic or dogmatic aspects Such liberal-minded men of God drew their inspiration from the Quran and the life of the Prophet but instead of parading about their religious orthodoxy, they laid greater stress 'on the purificat ion of one's innerself in order to attain lasting spiritual bliss' The dawn of consciousness about the existence of one Supreme Power, the Almighty Creator, called Allah in Islam, was enough to enchant the minds of the virtuous to seek personal communion with Him through self-surrender, meditation and total dedication to the service of mankind, like the Indian mystics or Bhakti reformers Sufism had no creed or dogma other than that of Islam and, for a long time, it had no organisation or monastic order It is said that it assumed the form of a regular movement in Persia in the ninth century as a reaction against the rigid formalism of Islam It received a theosophical basis during the age the Abbasid Caliphs of Baghdad and the sufi saints drew freely from the mystic concepts of other peoples and religions, including Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism and Jainism Tara Chand characterises, Sufism as a complex phenomenon, comparable to a stream which gathers volume by the joining of tributaries from many lands' Mysticism was looked upon with disfavour by the Muslim fundamentalists, both Sunnis and Shias, as a result, the sufis were sometimes persecuted and some of them were actually beheaded on charge of apostasy from Islam The credit for bringing about re conciliation between orthodox Islam and sufism goes to Al Ghazali

(c 1057-1112 A D), an Arab philosopher He provided a metaphysical basis to mysticism as a part and parcel of the Islamic theology

Various attempts have been made to define the term sufi which came to be employed sometime in the ninth century for those of the men of piety and mystics among the Muslims who, unmindful of the formalism and social taboos of the materialistic world 'adored God above all things' and,who were 'so much absorbed' in their meditation to God that even a moment's diversion from the thought of the Absolute was unbearable to them' According to some, the term sufi was derived from safa (pure) because of the purity of their hearts, purity of their thoughts and the nobility of their actions Others derive the term from saff (line, queue) and bold that the sufis were so called because they were in the fore front of the line or queue before God 'through the elevation of their desires towards Him and the turning of their hearts unto Him' According to a third definition, the term sufi has been derived from the word suffa (a bench) as the virtuous characters and qualities of these saints were similar to those of Ashab of Suff—or 'People of the Bench" who were attached to the Prophet, they were called his Companions (Sahaba) and they lived 'austerely puritan lives The term sufi also bears resemblance with the word or coarse wool, suggesting 'thereby that the sufis might have been so called purpose sheet of cloth All these derivatives have, been beautifully, summed up in a definition by Sheikh al Islam Zakariyah Ansari as follows

> "Sufism teaches how to purify one's self, improve one's morals and build up one's inner and outer life in order to attain perpetuals bliss Its subject-matter is the ourification and its end or aim is the attainment of eternal felicity and blessedness "

It is now generally held that the sufis Constituted an important segment of the muslim society from its very inception, they were 'devout muslims who moved within the limit of shara and believed it as the true way to salvation' According to an observation 'the orthodox Muslims depend upon external conduct while the' sufis seek inner purity The orthodox believe in blind obedience to, or observance of religious rituals while the sufis think love to be the only means of reaching God'

The sufis were the peaceful emissaries of Islam They dedicated their lives to the service of mankind and the spread of the Islamic faith The propagation of Islam was regarded by them to be the greatest and the most meritorious service to be rendered to the people, to lead them from darkness to light and to convert the *dar ul harab* (the land of darkness) into dar ul Islam or the Land of Islam was the highest mission of their lives Incidentally the same was said to be the declared objective of the fanatical mullas and war mongers like Mahmud of Ghazni with the difference that whereas the sufi saints laid stress on the nobility of the means for the attainment of a noble object, the others were unscrupulous about the choice of the means The sufis migrated to the far-off countries and lived in the midst of the non-muslims, called kafirs, where they carried on the work of proselytisation through peaceful means Consciously or unconsciously they also played a role similar to the one played by the Christian missionaries in the wake of the establishment of European colonialism in Asia and Africa Sometimes they formed the advance-guard of the armies of Islam and paved the way for the conquest of new territories More often, they carried on the work of consolidation of the Islamic faith among the conquered people by the application of pacific and humanitarian means

Sufis in India

The advent of sufis to India dates back to the arab conquest of Sind The arabs were successfully contained in Sind and Multan by the heroic resistance put up by the rajput chiefs, of northern, central and western India, individually or collectively, for more than three hundred years albeit there are reasons to, believe that some of the sufi saints might have penetrated into different parts of the country during this very period After the establishment of the muslim rule in northern India, the sufis, from the muslim countries of central Asia, began to migrate to this country in large numbers, obviously to reap the harvest of military conquest by gaining converts to Islam from among the vanquished They moved about in the robes and style of the Indian sadhus and established their hermitages at a number of places They set up their abode in the residential quarters or colonies of the low castes on the periphery of the hindu towns Their first object was to win their love and confidence and reconcile them to the alien rule Secondly, they persuaded them to embrace Islam on merit The sultanate of Delhi was confined to only a part of India for most of the time but the sufis spread themselves throughout the country and carried on peaceful propagation of Islam It bespeaks of the liberal-mindedness and magnanimity of the hindu rulers who permitted the sufis to make converts from among their subjects in spite of their deadly political conflict with the turko-afghan rulers of Delhi

Sufism was based on the monistic philosophy, which fundamental principle of Islam Nevertheless, the sufis, like the Indian mystics or exponents of the bhakti cult, adopted their own line of thought and philosophy speculations in visualising the Absolute Reality or the Supreme Creator and the relationship

between Him and His creation In this respect, they, sometimes showed considerable difference of opinion with the fundamentalists among the muslim theologians Just like the bhakti reformers, the sufis also differed with one another in many respects as regards their methods of teaching That is why, in the final phase of its development, Sufism came to be organised into a number of *silsilahs* or orders, the founder of each of which was said to have made some special contribution or given an individualistic touch of the mystic philosophy or the organisational set tip of his disciples Of course, it may be worthwhile to enumerate the salient principles of sufism with special reference to the main teachings of the Indian sufis

Then monistic philosophy of Sufism was based on the theory of *wahdat ul wajud* or 'the Unity of Being', according to which the Creator (Haq) and the Created (Khalq) were identical, in other words, God was the Unity behind all plurality and the Reality behind all phenomenal appearance Sheikh Muhiuddin Ibnul Arabi (c 1165-1248 A D), the author of the theory, explains it in these words

> "There is nothing but God, nothing in existence other than He, there is not even a there'; where the essence of all things is one "

This theory philosophy of was in conformity with the Vedanta philosophy of absolute monotheism according to, which the Creator and the Creature (man), or God and the Soul constituted one Absolute Reality The sufis stood for the establishment of harmonious relationships between God and the soul, hence their yearning for 'direct communion with God' which could be attained in this very mortal life (khaki jama) through intense love for and total surrender and dedication to the Supreme Power The sufi saints, in their capacity as Pirs—the living teachers or spiritual

guides (like the gurus of the bhakti cult) showed the path and suggested the means to their followers, called murids, for the attainment of that eternal bliss which was called ma'rifat (gnosis) or wasl (union) by them The orthodox muslim theologians were opposed to the doctrines of *wahdut ul wajud* and *ma'rifat,* according to them God as the Absolute Power was indivisible and unrivalled in His eternal existence, and that the relationship between God and man was the one between the Creator and the creature or master and the salve The sufis on the other hand, compared this relationship with the one that existed between the Lover and the Beloved or Husband and wife According to them, the presence of God could be felt by any one who attended to His call with a loving heart The sufis held that God was an invisible Absolute Reality and an Eternal Beauty which they named as Jamal, and this universe was not a mere illusion either, it was the visible or outward manifestation of God, and it was named as Husn (lovable beauty) They argued that self-manifestation and desire to be loved' was an essential attribute of the Eternal Beauty Hence the sufi philosophy was based on the principle of 'Love' which was 'the essence of all religions' and 'the cause of all creation'

The mystics practised austerities and laid stress on complete surrender to the will of God, they stood for 'self-purification' and complete 'absorption in their Beloved God' which could not be secured 'by self-endeavour' They felt that the purity of heart was far greater than rituals and ceremonials, and that it was the only way by which truth could be realised According to one version, a sufi had to pass through ten stages of dedication to God before he could attain communion with Him, these were Tauba (Repentance), Wara' (Abstinence), zuhd (Piety), Faqr

(Poverty), Sabr (Patience), shukr (Gratitude), Khauf (Fear), Raja (Hope), Tawakkul (Contentment) and Riza (Submission to the Divine Will)

Like the bhakti reformers, most of the sufis renounced the materialistic pursuits of the world, it was called *Tark i Dunya* which has been explained by K A Nizami thus

> "The general impression that tark i dunya meant adopting an hermit's attitude towards life and severing all earthly connections is not confirmed by contemporary mystic records In fact, it was not the world as such which the, mystics rejected but the materialistic approach towards life and its problems which they hated and despised The more a man got involved in materialistic pursuits, farther he drifted from his spiritual objectives "

Some of the sufi saints observed celibacy while others married and lived as ordinary householders A few of the prominent sufis are said to have more than one living wife because it was permitted by the Islamic law They mostly depended on futuh or unasked for charity though some of them took up to the cultivation of waste land as the means of their livelihood, of course, it was never their intention to create a class of parasites on the society The sufis lived in the hermitages, called khanqahs (monasteries) or Jamait khana—'the place of congregation' Usually the sufis avoided government service as also the state patronage although some of them accepted government grants in land and money and lived in affluence

It is now universally recognised that the prevalence of Bhakti Movement exercised a profound impact on the Indian Sufism and vice versa The sufi doctrines show a striking similarity with Vedanta but it was not because of the instant impact of the Indian thought on the former in the medieval age The sufi

philosophy was nourished on the Persian soil which, in turn, had been permeated with Buddhism and Vedic philosophy long before the birth of Islam It was thus the remote Indian cultural heritage of sufism which provided it with religious fervour and modes of expression similar to those of Buddhism and Vedanta Nevertheless, the Indian sufis constituted a class by themselves quite distinct from their counterparts in other muslim countries This later development of Sufism on the Indian soil owes much to the Indian thought and social environment Free from narrow-mindedness and prejudices, the sufis followed the dictum, while in Rome do as the Romans do They felt at home in the company of the Indian ascetics and strove to look like the ones They adopted their garments, practices and the outward behaviour to ward off the suspicion of the lower orders of hindus' amongst whom they worked for the propagation of Islam They freely imitated the ascetic practices of the Indian mystics and the sadhus, particularly involving physical torture of their bodies and showmanship Their khanqahs were built in the fashion of the buddhist monasteries and hindu mathas where Indian customs and ceremonials were adopted wholesale Like the hindu ascetics, the sufis also shaved the heads of the new entrants to their order and observed certain rituals which were totally' unknown to their counterparts in other muslim countries They received salutations from the native visitors, their prospective disciples, as per their indigenous customs and made those practices apart and parcel of their, own organisational set up Sufism was thus thoroughly Indianised and the sufi enjoyed great respect among the people, hindus and muslims alike

The sufis were divided into a number of sects, called silsilahs or orders According to one estimate, as

many as 175 such orders of the sufis came into existence in the muslim world Abul Fazl lists fourteen orders of the sufis which apparently found their way to India although only two of these took deep roots in the Indian soil, these were the Chishti and the Suhravardi orders The Suhravardi Silsilah made its presence felt in Sind and northwestern India, in general, whereas the Chishti Silsilah became most prominent throughout the country

Khwaja Muinuddin of the Chishti Silsilah was born in Silsilah (Seistan) in c 1141 A D Having lost his father in his childhood, he turned an ascetic and wandered about in the muslim, countries until he was initiated into the Chishti order of the sufis by Khwaja Usman at Nishapur In the prime of his youth, Muinuddin migrated to Lahore which was then ruled by the successors of Mahmud of Ghazni Soon afterwards he shifted to Ajaimeru (modern Ajmer), then the headquarters of the Chauhans, and set up his abode on the outskirts of the town for the propagation of the Islam among the low caste hindus According to A L Srivastava, this happened before the invasion of Muhammad of Ghur and the defeat and death of Prithvi Raj If the Khwaja deserves praise for braving all kinds of difficulties in his evangelical work in a foreign country, it also speaks volumes of Hindu tolerance and friendliness towards non-Hindu foreigners ' The Khwaja had two wives one of whom was said to be a hindu convert to Islam He lived like a typical hindu saint and preached the gospel of absolute monotheism in the true spirit of the Vedanta philosophy with the only difference that he gave the name Allah to the Almighty Creator He won over the hearts of the people around him by his selfless service to the poor and the needy and occasionally went on spiritual tours to various parts of Rajputana The

khwaja enjoyed a long life and made mạny converts to Islam through peaceful means from among the sturdy rajputs, he also attempted to pacify the sour tempers of the hindus after the loss of their political independence His mausoleum at Ajmer has since become an important centre of pilgrimage for hindus, and muslims alike

Sheikh Hamiduddin, one of the disciples of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti, set up his abode in a mud-house in a village near Nagaur (Rajputana) and carried on peaceful propagation of Islam among the rajputs He married and lived on cultivation like an ordinary Indian villager Vegetarian by food-habits, he mixed freely with the hindus and won their admiration for his virtuous living Sheikh Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki, yet another disciple of Khwaja Muinuddin’ Chishti,, was an immigrant from Ferghana, which, later on, became famous as the homeland of Babir He settled in Delhi during the reign of Altumish on the directive of Khwaja Muinuddin Chishti He declined to accept the royal patronage and professed to live in poverty Music, vocal as well as instrumental, was considered to be of great spiritual value by the Chishti saints, accordingly, they invited musicians and singers, hindus and muslims alike, to entertain the audience at their khanqahs by the recitation of spiritual songs and hymus It added to the cultural aspect of Sufism and attracted huge crowds of listeners even when they had no intentions of embracing Islam It is said that Bakhtiyar Kaki was very fond of spiritual music, once during the course of a musical concert, he fell into a state of ecstasy and breathed his last sometime in 1235 A D It is generally held that Qutub Minar, whose construction was started by Qutubuddin Aibek and completed by Altumish, was named after this sufi saint, his remains lie buried in a small mausoleum in the vicinity of the Minar

Sheikh Farid or Baba Farid (1175-1265) of Ajodhan (modern Pakpatan in Pakistan) was a disciple of Qutubuddin Bakhtiyar Kaki He belonged to a royal family of Afghanistan and his grandfather had migrated to Multan Sheikh Farid led a house-holder's life He is said to have many wives and children, brought up in a state of utmost poverty A brilliant orator with poetic expression, Farid popularised the Chishti order throughout the country He rubbed shoulders with the bhakti reformers and mixed freely with the hindu masses His discourses and spiritual expositions went home to all the people, hindus and muslim alike A fairly large number of his 'pithy sayings' have been incorporated in the Adi Granth of the sikhs Sheikh Farid's 'Jama'at Khana at Ajodhan', writes K A Nizami, was one of the great mystic centres of the age, and all sorts of people—high and low, rich and poor, flocked to it to soothe their tired nerves in the cool, spiritual atmosphere that prevailed there At a time when the entire country was resounding with the din and clatter of the Ghurid arms, Baba Farid sat cool and collected in his tumbling hut, teaching lessons of human love and affection Today the territorial achievements of Shihabuddin and his turkish slave-officers are tales of the past, but the message of Baba Farid still echoes through the corridors of time '

Sheikh Farid produced a galaxy of sufi preachers who spread the message of Islam through mysticism in India and abroad Hazarat Nizamuddin Auliya (1236-1325) was the most brilliant of his disciples who set up his headquarters at Ghiaspur, now located by his shrine in Delhi He gave an Islamic touch to the sociocultural atmosphere of the capital and won thee hearts of its inhabitants by his virtuous character and social service to the poor and the needy It is said that

seven sultans sat 'on the 'throne of Delhi, one, after another, during the lifetime of Nizamuddin but he never visited the royal court nor accepted, royal favour Nevertheless, most of the turkish ruling elite and scholars, including some members of the royalty, regarded him as their *Pir* or spiritual teacher, he was popularly known as Mahbub i Ilahi by his followers, called murids Hazarat Nizamuddin Auliya was an exception among the prominent Chishti saints who practised celibacy, big successor at the Chishti Khanpah of Delhi was Sheikh Nasiruddin Chiragh

Sheikh Salim Chishti was a contemporary of Akbar the Great He lived the life of an ordinary householder in his caved welling at Sikri long before the emperor decided to build his imperial capital there It was Akbar who, because of his intensely religious and mystic attitude towards life, felt drawn towards the Saint and struck a personal attachment with him, The scholars of political history of the time know how Prince Salim (later the emperor Jahangir) was born at the hermitage of the Sheikh and also named after him by Akbar, the latter loved to call his infant son as Sheikhu Baba Sheikh Salim Chishti expired during the lifetime of Akbar and was buried in the courtyard of the Jama Masjid of Fatehpur Sikri Akbar ordered the construction of a beautiful mausoleum over his grave which attracts millions of the pilgrims, hindus, as well as muslims and visitors from all over the world as one of the extant monuments of exquisite beauty in the midst of the ruins of Fatehpur Sikri

The Suhravardi Silsilah was the second most popular order of the sufis which flourished in northwestern India, its foundations on the Indian soil were laid by Sheikh Bahauddin Zakariya of Multan Born at Kot Aror near Multan in c 1182, Bahauddin spent many years of his youthful life in central Asia

where he visited many important centres of Islamic learning, including Samarqand, Bukhara, Mecca, Medina, Baghdad, and Khurasan He was initiated into mysticism by Sheikh Shahabuddin of Baghdad Bahauddin carried on his missionary work at Multan for about a quarter of a century before his death in 1262 A D , and rose to be the most prominent muslim divine of his age in northwestern India Unlike the Chishti saints, the exponents of the Suhravardi order did not believe in excessive austerity or self-mortification, rather they constituted an influential and affluent priesthood of the muslims They lived comfortable family lives and felt no scruples in accepting costly presents and patronage from the muslim aristocracy. They were thick with the ruling elite, amassed huge wealth and took active part in state politics After his death, Sheikh Bahauddin was succeeded by his son Sadruddin Arif as the chief pontiff (khalifa) of the Suhravardi order at Multan while one of his disciples, Sayyad Jalaluddin Surkh Bukhari, set up his khanqah at Uchch (Sind) The Suhravardi Silsilah was confined mostly to the upper strata of the muslim society The visitors in its khanqahs 'were treated just like guests and lavishly entertained to dainty dishes According to an observation, all kinds of people were not welcomed at the Suhravardi khanqahs Bahauddin Zakariya is reported to have said that he had nothing to do with the general public as no reliance could be placed upon them He gave spiritual blessings to the select, and did not permit qalandars and other fakirs to visit his khanqah He had fixed hours for meeting visitors He did not like to be disturbed by them at odd hours '

Impact of sufism on Indian society

Like the Bhakti Movement, Sufism also acted As a great social force in moulding the character of the

medieval Indian society. The sufi saints added to the numerical strength of the muslim, population by encouraging conversions to Islam through peaceful and nonviolent means. They played a great role in building the social and cultural life of the muslims. They set into motion the forces for the rapid Indianisation of Islam as well as the muslims. They defined the ethical standards, built the moral character of the muslim youth and helped them in developing a healthy and rational attitude towards life. The sufis played a significant role in the educational advancement of the society. Their khanqahs became centres of knowledge and wisdom. The religious discourses of the sufis helped in the intellectual and spiritual advancement of the audience while in some khanqahs formal religious education was also imparted; some of the sufi saints themselves acted as teachers.

Sufism exercised a healthy influence in bringing about reconciliation between the hindus and muslims although its direct-impact on the hindu religious thought and social life was negligible. The sufis, particularly belonging to the Chishti order, established rapport with the low caste hindus but voluntary conversions on large scale were practically unknown. The hindus, particularly belonging to the high castes, remained aloof from the sufi saints for a very long time.

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Mughal Empire

The Mughal Empire which had earned the admiration of contemporaries for its extensive, territories, military might and cultural accomplishments disintegrated after the death of Aurangzeb

Within a short span of about 50 years, nine Mughal Emperors occupied the throne in quick succession and were not able to provide any effective government Taking advantage of their weakness, many adventurers carved out independent principalities of their own and freed themselves from the central control Aurangzeb had created more problems during his reign than he was able to solve It is true that some of them he inherited, but many of them were his creation Those together shook the Mughal Empire to its very foundation

No wonder, the political and financial horizon at the time of his death betokened the dark prospects of decline, decay and dissolution The glory of the Mughal Empire was becoming past history and its tragic end was in the offing Stanley Lanepoole writes, "Even before the end of his reign, Hindustan was in confusion and the signs of coming dissolution had appeared As some imperial corpse, preserved for ages in its dread seclusion, crowned and armed and still majestic, yet falls into dust at the mere breath of heaven, so fell the Empire of the Mughals when the great name that guarded it was no more It was as though some splendid palace reared with infinite skill with the costliest stones and precious metals

of the earth had attained its perfect beauty only to collapse in undistinguishable ruin when the insidious roots of the creeper sapped the foundation Even if Aurangzeb had left a successor of his own mantle and moral stature, it may he doubted whether the process of disintegration could have been stayed The disease was too far advanced for even the heroic surgery

At the time of the death of Aurangzeb on 20 February 1707, the Mughal Empire consisted of 21 Subahs (provinces) one in Afghanistan, 14 in North India and 6 in the Deccan It embraced in the North Kashmir and all Afghanistan from the Hindukush southwards to a line 36 miles North of Ghazni, on the West coast stretched in theory to the Northern frontier of Goa and inland to Belgaum and the Tungabhadra river No Emperor of India since the death of Asoka had ruled over such extensive territories The years 1686-89 which saw the annexation of Bijapur and Golkunda and the apparent collapse of the Maratha power, marked the zenith of Mughal political ascendancy However, the vast extent of his Empire was a source of weakness and not strength It was too large to be ruled by one man from one centre

The religious policy of Aurangzeb affected the fortunes of the Mughal Empire Religious persecution acted as a provocation in the risings of the Satnamis, the Bundelas and the Sikhs The fear of suppression of Hinduism was an important factor The urge to uphold Hindu Dharma stiffened the resistance of the Marathas The imposition of Jizya offended the sentiments and injured the material interests of the Hindus Aurangzeb's zeal for Islam weakened the foundations of his multireligious imperial structure The attempt to annex Marwar was a grave mistake It led to a long and costly war in Rajasthan It alienated the Rajputs whose political and military support had played a vital role in the

consolidation and maintenance of Mughal power for a century

The Deccan war of Aurangzeb contributed substantially to the decline of the Mughal Empire That endless war exhausted the treasury The Government became bankrupt The soldiers starving from arrears of pay, mutinied The Maratha country became "devoid of trees and bare of crops, their place being taken by the bones of men and beasts " In two years (1702-4), plague and famine took a toll of over two million souls The Deccan war affected the administration and economy of North India Aurangzeb's long absence from his capital weakened the Central Government in its relations with the provinces The provincial Governors (Subahdars), largely free from his supervision and control, ceased to have respect or fear for imperial authority The administrative machinery in the provinces was weakened because their best soldiers, highest officers and all their collected revenues were sent to the Deccan The older and more settled, peaceful and prosperous provinces in the North were left, to be governed by 'minor officers with small contingent and incomes quite inadequate for maintaining central authority All classes of lawless men began to raise their heads Desultory war ruined large parts of Rajasthan, Some Rajput Zamindars created in Malwa The plundering Maratha bands penetrated into Malwa and Gujarat The Jats carried on raids in the Agra region The Sikhs fought against the Mughals and the hill Rajas in the Punjab In Bengal, there were hostilities between the English traders and the Mughal officers In his exile in the Deccan, Aurangzeb lost his grip over the administration of those provinces which formed the backbone of the Mughal Empire

A large portion of the income of the Mughal, state was spent on the army on account of constant warfare The number of Mansabdars rose from 8000 under Shah

Jahan to 14,449 under Aurangzeb The army hill of Aurangzeb was roughly double of that of Shah Jahan Out of 14,449 Mansabdars under Aurangzeb, about 7000 were paid Jagirs and 7450 were paid in cash The Mansabdari system reached crisis as a result of the enormous increase in the number of the Mansabdars who had to be paid through Jagirs As the number of Jagirs was not adequate, many Mansabdars had to wait for some time before they could get Jagirs, Even when Jagirs were available in the Deccan, the Government could not always ensure security of tenure because those were often exposed to the risk of sudden occupation by the Marathas Constant military operations in the Deccan and disturbances and law-lessness in the North Indian provinces, reduced cultivation in both regions and the peasants were pot able to pay their full dues to the Jagirdars The uncertainty about the income from their Jagirs weakened the numerical strength of the army Large-scale corruption crept into the Mansabdari system and sapped the foundations of the Mughal military power

War, disorder and official exactions injured trade and industry Trade almost ceased in the Deccan The Maratha raiders made it almost impossible for caravans to travel North of the Narmada without strong escorts

The Mughal nobles who were the pillars of the Empire, succumbed to the fatal vice of love of ease and luxury and became "pale persons in muslin petticoats" Immigration from Persia and Central Asia almost came to a stop Alienated by Aurangzeb's policy of suspicion and hostility, the Rajputs were reluctant to serve the Mughal Empire Moreover, Rajput society no longer produced warrior-statesmen like Man Singh and Raja Jai Singh High-spirited, talented and energetic officers found themselves checked, discouraged and driven to sullen inactivity Aurangzeb, in his later years, could bear no contradiction, could hear no unpalatable truth, but

surrounded himself with smooth-tongued and pompous echoes of his own voice His ministers became no better than clerks passively registering his edicts Such nobles could not carry the burden of a great Empire The only survivor of the old nobility in the last years of Aurangzebs reign was Asad Khan about whom Aurangzeb said, "There is not, nor will there ever be, any Wazir better than Asad khan "

There was inefficiency in the Mughal army It was composed of diverse racial elements and religious groups such as Turks, Afghans, Rajputs and Hindustanis It was a mercenary force The real allegiance of the troops was not to the imperial throne but to the persons in immediate command If a prince, or a Mansabdar or a tributary chief rebelled against, the Mughal monarch he usually carried his troops with him The infantry was practically useless There was no naval wing The proportion of officers to men on active service was very low The Mughal army moved like an unwieldy city and was incapable of swift action or brilliant adventure The camp-followers were more than the combatants Luxuries of camp life demoralised the nobles who were the leaders of the army Ease-loving commanders could not maintain a high standard of discipline among the troops There was no commissariat service Each man had to make his own arrangement for transport Supplies were provided by large Bazars marching with the army Antiquated weapons were used and antiquated methods of warfare were followed Aurangzeb made no attempt to improve the Mughal army except that he doubled the number of Mansabdars and added to the number of troops

At the end of Aurangzeb's reign, the Mughal Empire "was in a state of hopeless decay, administration, culture, economic life, military strength and social organisation--all seemed to be hastening to utter ruin, and, dissolution"

Successors of Aurangzeb

Bahadur Shah 1 (1707-12)

In the closing years of his life, Aurangzeb was perturbed by the gloomy prospects of a bloody war among his sons Therefore, he attempted an equitable distribution of the Empire among his sons He intended that his eldest son Muazzam should receive 12 Subahs with his capital at Delhi Mohammad Azam should have Agra, the Subahs of the Deccan, Malwa and Gujarat His youngest son Kam Baksh was to have the provinces of Bijapur and Hyderabad Though the will of Aurangzeb is considered to be of doubtful veracity, the presence of Muazzam in Kabul, deputation of Kam Baksh by his father to Bijapur and that of Mohammad Azam to Malwa, lend support to the presumption that Aurangzeb did not want his sons to fight among themselves after his death

However, the wish of Aurangzeb was not respected When Aurangzeb died, Wazir Asad Khan who was the master of the situation, assembled the other Amirs and in consultation with them, sent messengers to Mohammad Azam asking him to return post-haste to Ahmednagar, Mohammad Azam arrived there and was proclaimed king an 14 March 1707 Most of the officers and commanders tendered their submission to the new Emperor but there were others who were indifferent towards him Even Asad Khan became lukewarm later on The disqualification of Mohammad Azam was that he had Shia inclinations Unmindful of the attitude of the nobles, Mohammad Azam decided to march straight to Agra

Muazzam was not sitting idle He left Kabul and arrived at Pul-i-Shah Daulah where he celebrated his accession and took up the title of Bahadur Shah He had already conciliated Budh Singh Hada of Bundi and Bijay Singh Kachhwaha of Amber and through them had enlisted a large number of Rajputs His second son lost

no time and marched towards Agra where he joined his father The capital fell into the hands of Muazzam who thereby scored a march over his rival The rival armies of Muazzam and Azam faced each other at Jajau near Samugarh There was a bloody battle in which Azam and his two sons Bidar Bakht and Wala Jah were killed

Muazzam had still to fight against Kam Baksh who had already got the Khutba recited and coins struck in his name in the Deccan Bahadur Shah at first followed a policy of conciliation towards Kam Baksh, but when that failed, he marched to Hyderabad and arrived there in January 1709 On the eve of the decisive battle which occurred on 13 January 1709, the position of Kam Baksh was pitiable He had neither men nor money However, both Kam Baksh and his son fought bravely They were wounded and captured, Kam Baksh was brought to Bahadur Shah in a palanquin and Bahadur Shah was very affectionate towards him but Kam Baksh died at night Thus ended the war of succession and Bahadur Shah became the undisputed lord of the Mughal Empire

Immediately after his victory, Mohammad Azam Bahadur Shah conferred new titles and higher ranks on his supporters, Munim Khan and his son Naim Khan, Munim Khan was appointed Wazir However, being a man of conciliatory nature, Bahadur Shah invited to his court the associates of his rival and not only forgave them for their opposition to him but also gave them their due share in the Government Asad Khan, the Wazir of Aurangzeb, was offered a new office of Wakil-i-Mutlaq and his son Zulfiqar Khan was made the Bakshi, However, by investing the office of the Chief Minister in two persons, Bahadur Shah opened the flood-gates of intrigue and contest for supreme power in the Government Though in keeping with the nature of the new Emperor, this compromise gave birth to a tradition

which was pregnant with potentialities of harm The rivalry of Munim Khan and Asad Khan was relieved for the time being by sending Asad Khan to Delhi and heaping on him a further appointment of the Governor of that city Asad Khan's family had also been in possession of the Subadari of the Deccan to which the Wakil-i-Mutlaq and his son clung

When Bahadur Shah ascended the throne, he was more than 63 and he had passed the age when he could be expected to show initiative in any work He was a man of mild and equitable temper, learned, dignified and generous He was incapable of saying no to anybody and his idea of statesmanship was to let matters drift and patch up a temporary peace by humouring everybody without facing issues and saving future trouble by making decisions promptly and courageously Though he, did not suffer from any vice, his complacency and negligence earned for him the title of Shah-i-Bekhabar (Heedless King) It was during his reign that intrigues began to increase at the royal court and he felt that he was too weak to suppress them Though not a great sovereign, he was still more successful than his successor in maintaining the dignity of the Empire He was profuse in the grant of titles and rewards and to keep tight control over the administration

A L Srivastava writes about Bahadur Shah, "He followed his policy of religious intolerance, retained the Jizya and did not appoint the Hindus to high posts " This is considered to be an extreme view of Bahadur Shah He was better than his father in his religious policy If he had been in the prime of his life, he might have done much to arrest the progress of the dissolution of the Mughal Empire by his conciliatory and tolerant policy

Bahadur Shah was a Shia by faith and that led to the growth of two parties in the court The Irani party

consisted of nobles like Asad Khan and his son Zulfiqar Khan who professed the Shia faith The Turani party consisted of powerful nobles like Chin Qilch Khan and Ghazi-ud-din Feroz Jang who followed the Sunni beliefs of Islam This political strife between the parties further weakened the Mughal Empire

The Rajputs

Bahadur Shah had to deal with many problems As regards the Rajputs, the embers of disaffection were still there The Rathor ruler, Ajit Singh, had expelled the imperial officers after the death of Aurangzeb and occupied his capital Jodhpur The Rajput ruler of Amber, Jay Singh, had offended Bahadur Shah by helping Muhammad Azam, Rana Amar Singh of Udaipur was not friendly towards Bahadur Shah The ruler of Kotah was in the Deccan with Zulfiqar Khan and the ruler of Bundi was with Bahadur Shah The strategic position of Rajput states demanded immediate action Bahadur Shah resolved to march to jodhpur by way of Amber and Ajmer His departure from Agra cowed down the spirits of the Rana of Udaipur who sent his brother to Bahadur Shah along with a letter of congratulations and numerous costly presents As regards Amber, it was given to Bijay Singh who was a rival claimant to Amber Ajit Singh of Jodhpur was defeated and the fort of Merta was captured Ajit Singh surrendered and he was not only pardoned but also given a special robe of honour and title of Maharaja and his rank was fixed at 3500 Zat and 3000 Sawar His two sons were also enrolled Mansabdars However, the peace restored in Rajputana did not prove to be enduring Ajit Singh, Jay Singh and Amar Singh formed a confederacy with the object of completely rooting out the Mughal influence from Rajputana The allies invested jodhpur and compelled its Faujdar to abandon the fort They marched towards Agra and defeated the Faujdar of Hindaun and Bayana However,

they were defeated by the Faujdars of Mewat and Narnaul Bahadur Shah assembled armies against the Rajputs but at the same time followed a policy of conciliation The result was that Jay Singh and Ajit Singh were restored to their former ranks Bahadur Shah might have taken action against the Rajputs but the situation in the Punjab precipitated his departure In his Rajput policy, Bahadur Shah was firm in suppressing the insurgents but he was not against a compromise with them

The Sikhs

Bahadur Shah had to deal with the Sikhs in the Punjab Under the leadership of Gobind Singh, the Sikhs had carried a fierce struggle against Aurangzeb, but after his death, Bahadur Shah became friendly with the Sikh Guru The Guru met Bahadur Shah at Agra and was received with honours due to him He was successfully persuaded to accompany the Mughal army to the Deccan On reaching Nander, the Guru separated himself from the Emperor and decided to pass the rest of his life there However, he was murdered on 17 November 1708 Banda Bahadur assumed the military leadership of the Sikhs at that stage He collected thousands of Sikhs from various parts of the Punjab to fight against the Muslims and captured Kaithal, Samana, Shahabad, Ambala, Kapuri and Sadhura His greatest victory was against Wazir Khan, Governor of Sirhind whom he defeated and killed After a wholesale massacre of the Muslim population of Sirhind, Banda Bahadur captured Saharanpur In this way, the entire territory between the Sutlej and Jamuna passed into the hands of the Sikhs The Sikh forces reached the outskirts of Delhi and took to plunder

When the inhabitants of Sirhind, Thaneshwar etc , represented their tales of woe and misery to Bahadur Shah, he hurried to the scene of trouble in June 1710 He

bypassed Delhi, prohibited his soldiers from visiting the capital and issued orders to the Hindus in his train to shave off their beards so that they may be distinguished from the enemy Extensive preparations were made to suppress the insurrection In the face of the heavy odds against them, the Sikhs were unable to keep firm to their ground They were driven out of Thaneshwar, ousted from Sirhind, expelled from Lahore, closely invested at Lohgarh and were made to suffer crushing defeats at numerous places However, they did not give tip their plan of harassing the imperialists and plundering those who sided with them On account of the differences between the two Mughal generals, Banda was able to effect his escape There were fresh disturbances in the Bari Doab, but the Sikhs were defeated Banda was exposed to a grave danger However, the preoccupation of the Mughals elsewhere saved the Sikhs for the time being

The Deccan

As regards the Deccan policy of Bahadur Shah, it appears that he was not able to formulate a clear-cut and decisive policy After the death of Kam Baksh, Zulfiqar Khan was appointed the Viceroy of the Deccan He favoured conciliation with the Marathas, but the Vazir Munim Khan made a different approach Bahadur Shah released Sahu, son of Sambhaji and grandson of Shivaji That was done on the suggestion of Zulfiqar Khan Sahu was given his former Mansab but the Emperor was reluctant to recognise his claims to Chauth and Sardeshmukhi on the six Subahs of the Deccan This did not work and the Marathas restarted their plundering raids They ravaged even the Jagirs of Zulfiqar Khan Pis representative secretly concluded a pact with Sahu by which his claims were conceded but that was not confirmed by the Emperor The result was that the Deccan remained a scene of confusion and lawlessness

Bahadur Shah died on 27 February 1712 and with him disappeared even the last semblance of the glory and greatness of the Mughals He held the reins of administration in his hand His word was final in the state He rose high above party factions and court intrigues Unlike his successors, he cannot be said to have played the role of a mere puppet

When Banda escaped capture, Bahadur Shah reprimanded his favourite Munim Khan He showed firmness and discretion in his dealings with the Rajputs but he failed to solve the Rajput problem He might have succeeded in suppressing the Sikhs but before he could do so he died Though his attitude towards the Hindus was less intolerant than that of Aurangzeb, he did not abolish Jizya or cancel discriminatory regulation against the Hindus He failed to arrest the acceleration of the financial crisis He granted Jagirs recklessly and gave promotions and rewards to all and, sundry The result was that before his death, the royal treasury was empty and the salary of artillery men had into arrears

Bahadur Shah was the last Emperor of whom anything favourable can be said Henceforth, the rapid and complete abasement and practical dissolution of the Empire are typified in the incapacity and political insignificance of its sovereigns," Khafi Khan observes, "For generosity, munificence, boundless good nature, extenuation of faults and forgiveness of offences, very few monarchs have been found equal to Bahadur Shah in the histories of past times and especially in the race of Taimur But though he had no vice in his character such complacency and such negligence were exhibited in the protection of the state and in the Government and management of the country, that witty sarcastic people found the date of his accession in the words Shah-i-Bekhabar (Heedless King) "

Bahadur Shah was a man of mild and equitable temper', learned, dignified and generous to a fault

Jahandar Shah (1712-13)

The death of Bahadur Shah was followed by a civil war among his four sons, Jahandar Shah, Azim-ush-Shan, Jahan Shah and Rafi-ush-Shan The contestants were in such indecent haste about deciding the question of succession that the dead body of Bahadur Shah was not buried for about a month Jahandar Shah came out successful with the help of Zulfiqar Khan, Azim-ush-Shan was defeated and he disappeared in a sandstorm which swept the bed of the Ravi Jahan Shah was killed in the encounter with Zulfiqar Khan Rafi-ush-Shan, was deserted and deceived but he fought valiantly and faced death with the supreme courage of a soldier

Jahandar Shah was about 52 Years of age at the time of his accession to the throne He celebrated his success by making new appointments and distributing largesses to his supporters Zulfiqar Khan became the Chief Minister His father Asad Khan retained the title of Wakil-i-Mutlaq The friends of Zulfiqar Khan were introduced into other high offices The new reign did not stop with merely rewarding friends and supporters, but also took to execution, imprisonment and confiscation of property of those who had joined the vanquished princes The new Wazir fortified his position by surrounding himself with his supporters and eliminated opposition by destroying the unfriendly ones

The new Emperor moved from Lahore to Delhi and the next few months in the capital "were given up to dissipation" and the city "for a time fell under the domination of the Lord of Misrule Grand illuminations took place three times in every month So much oil was used that it rose to be half seer weight the rupee, then all the oil being expended, they had recourse to clarified

butter until it too cease to be procurable Grain also grew very dear "

Jahandar Shah was an utterly degenerate representative of the house of Timur, Babar and Akbar Frivolous, profligate, cruel and cowardly, servilely devoted to a favourite lady Lal Kanwar whose relatives he promoted wholesale to high honours to the disgust of the old nobles and the able and experienced servants of the state, he soon became generally odious and despicable " Jahandar Shah indulged in acts which for their impropriety, indecency and even cruelty, were unprecedented and helped considerably to bring down the prestige of royalty The Emperor did not even desist from visiting the vegetable market in the company of Lal Kanwar in a bullock cart and exposed himself to the abuses of the women selling vegetables On one of them, Zuhra, was bestowed high tank and Jagirs were assigned to her Her retinue came into clash with that of Chin Qilch Khan who later on became Nizam-ul-Mulk The behaviour of Lal Kanwar and her hold over the Emperor caused anger and estrangement in the royal family The lack of decorum which the Emperor exhibited in the company of Lal Kanwar and her relations, the low musicians who gathered every night to drink with the Emperor in the palace, created a strong feeling of resentment and all respect or fear for the Emperor ceased The nobles and men of position shunned the company of the Emperor

The Emperor set the evil example of a licentious and effeminate court life and vitiated the morals of the ruling class His influence made the recovery of the old imperial glory impossible He was reduced a puppet All authority was wielded by the Wazir, Zulfiqar Khan and the ministers who passed on their duties to their deputies Responsibilities were divided and offices were transferred from person to person according to the whim and fancy of the minister in power The temporary incumbents used

those opportunıtıes to make rapıd gaıns The result was that admınıstratıon was neglected and dısorder spread All sense of loyalty vanıshed Durıng hıs reıgn of eleven months, Jahandar Shah squandered away most of the treasurers accumulated by hıs predecessors The gold and sılver and other precıous artıcles collected sınce the tıme of Babar were thrown away

Zulfiqar Khan was overtaken wıth senıle decay By delegatıng all hıs authorıty to Subhag Chand, be lost all the ınfluence he had buılt up, He was bıtterly hated lıke hıs master Wıth such persons at the helm of affaırs, the fate of the Empıre can better be ımagıned than descrıbed

When such was the state of affaırs at the capıtal, Farrukh-sıyar, the second son of Azım-ush-Shan, took advantage of ıt He won over the support of Sayyıd Hussaın Alı, the Governor of Patna and Sayyıd Abdullah, the Governor of Allahabad He advanced wıth a large followıng to contest the throne wıth hıs uncle He overcame the opposıtıon of hıs cousın Azız-ud-dın who blocked hıs way at Khajulıa Near Agra, he confronted Jahandar Shah, Jahandar Shah deserted the army and fled from the battlefield ın the company of Lal Kanwar to Delhı ın a bullock cart Zulfiqar Khan was already makıng fast for the capıtal, Jahandar Shah took protectıon wıth Asad Khan, the Vakıl-ı-Mutlaq, who betrayed hım to hıs enemıes For such an act of treachery, Mad Khan and hıs son Zulfiqar Khan, had to pay dearly Mad Khan suffered dısgrace and Zulfiqar Khan was put to death Jahandar Shah was also put to death on 11 February 1713

Jahandar Shah was the first sovereıgn of the house of Tımur who proved hımself absolutely unfitted to rule because of hıs extreme proflıgacy, cruel nature, shallowness of mınd and cowardıce Iradat Khan, a contemporary hıstorıan, wrote about Jahandar Shah, "He was a weak man, devoted to pleasure, who gave hımself

no trouble about state affairs, or to gain the attachment of any of the nobility " Warid attributed the fall of Jahandar Shah to the "morning slumbering and mid-night carousing" In the reign of Jahandar Shah, "the owl dwelt in the eagle's nest and the crow took the place of the nightingale," Khafi Khan wrote, "In the brief reign of Jahandar Shah, violence and debauchery had full sway It was a fine time for minstrels and singers and all the tribes of dancers and actors There seemed to be a likelihood that Qazis would turn toss-pots, and Muftis became tipplers All the brothers and relatives, close and distant of Lal Kanwar, received Mansabs of four or five thousand, presents of elephants, drums and jewels, and were raised to dignity in their tribe, Worthy, talented and learned men were driven away and bold and impudent wits and tellers of fictitious anecdotes gathered round "

Farrukh-siyar (1713-19)

At the time of his accession to the throne, Farrukh-siyar was a youngman of 30 Although he was extremely handsome, he was utterly weak, thoughtless and devoid of physical and moral courage He was faithless to promises, ungrateful to benefactors, tortuous, in intrigues, cowardly and cruel He was led by personal favourites, Mir Jumla and Khan Dauran Khan He started picking up quarrels with the Sayyid Brothers and tried to exercise real power As the Sayyid Brothers had put him on the throne, they demanded complete control over the Government, particularly in the matter of appointments and distribution of the spoils of victory From day to day, the conflict became more and more bitter, Farrukh-siyar resorted to treachery and intrigue of the dirtiest type to dispose of the Sayyid Brothers

When Farrukh-siyar ascended the throne, he appointed Say id Abdullah as Prime Minister with the title of Qutb-ul-Mulk He appointed Husain Ali as Mir Bakshi

with the title of Amir-ul-Umara.. During his rule of about seven years, Farrukh-siyar was constantly afflicted by mental conflict caused by his will to assert his power and prerogative and by his concern not to wound the susceptibilities of his benefactors, the Sayyid Brothers. His weakness of will prevented him from taking bold decisions and suppressing his enemies. He proved himself unfit to be a sovereign,

Military Campaigns

Three military campaigns were undertaken during his reign to suppress the spirit of defiance prevailing in Northern India. In Marwar, Ajit Singh had reasserted his independence and even occupied Ajmer. Husain Ali marched against him and pursued him from pillar to post. In the end, Ajit Singh begged for peace which was granted on the condition that he gave one of his daughters in marriage to the Emperor, sent his son Abhay Singh to the court and promised to attend in person whenever summoned.

One of the greatest achievements of Farrukh-siyar was the defeat of the Sikhs under Banda Bahadur. Taking advantage of the chaos which prevailed after the death of Bahadur Shah, the Sikhs under Banda Bahadur had increased their power. Farrukh-siyar decided to suppress their power. He appointed Abdul Samad as the Governor of Lahore in 1714 with specific instructions to crush the Sikhs. In the meanwhile, dissensions occurred in the ranks of the Sikhs with the result that a large number of Sikh soldiers withdrew their support from Banda Bahadur. The Mughal Governor took full advantage of the new development and compelled Banda Bahadur to evacuate Lohgarh and retreat to Gurdaspur. Even there he was not allowed to live in peace. The place was stormed and Banda was forced to surrender in December 1715. Alongwith his 740 followers, he was

taken prisoner and brought to Delhi where he was brutally put to death Banda was executed with fiendish tortures

The third military project related to the suppression of the Jats who had become strong under the leadership of Churaman who had started levying unauthorised road-tolls, terrorised the local Jagirdars and constructed a stronghold at Thun Raja Jay Singh pressed him hard and Churaman approached the Wazir to secure pardon for him and the same was given

Party politics formed an important phase in the court life during the reign of Farrukh-siyar There was jealousy and rivalry among the nobles belonging to different factions, particularly the Turan's, the Irans, the Afghans and Hindustanis The Turanis had come from Trans-Oxiana and they professed the Sunni faith The Iranis had migrated from the Eastern and 'Western provinces of Iran and were Shias The Afghans had come from the mountainous border regions across the Indus and many of them belonged to the Rohilla tribe They were mostly Sunnis Among the Hindustani nobles were Muslim families who had settled in India for many generations and were jealous of the new arrivals These factions remained under control till the death of Bahadur Shah I However, after that, their importance and influence increased because every rival claimant to the imperial throne asked for their help Each faction tried to establish its control over the person of the Emperor and was prepared to adopt any means to achieve its objective These parties conformed neither to religion nor to race nor even to nationality As to principles, there were none whatsoever It were the individuals and their satellites who mattered Their governing passion was self-interest and their guiding maxim was personal aggrandisement None cared for the fairness or foulness of the means to achieve its end The repercussions of such display of rivalry and disunity were far-reaching on the fortunes of

the Empire and disastrous for Farrukh-siyar. The Mughal imperial court was the centre of intrigues and counter-intrigues by one party against the other.

The palace revolutions of king-making were the work of the Hindustani party under the leadership of the Sayyid Brothers, while the more effective and real revolution by which was brought about the fall of the Sayyid Brothers was the work of the Irani of Turani party, also called, "Emperor's friends." This triumph of the king's friends over the king-makers was of very great importance in history. Asaf Jah and his brother Mohammad Amin Khan gained ascendancy later in the court and became the pillars of the Mughal Imperial court. None of these parties had any solid national programme before them which could have given them the name of political parties. They were only party factions which concerned them merely with efforts for their personal ascendancy and achievement of selfish ends. The worst consequence of this party politics was that the Mughal imperial Court became a hotbed of intrigues which confusion and chaos in the Court and thus resulted in corruption and inefficiency in the entire governmental machinery of the Empire.

Plot against Sayyid Brothers

Farrukh-siyar participated in three plots Against the Sayyid Brothers. When Husain Ali was deputed to lead the imperial forces to quell the insurrection in Rajputana, secret letters were written to Ajit Singh Rathor, the rebel Raja of jodhpur, promising him rich reward if he did away with Husain Ali. However, the plot failed. Ajit Singh submitted and passed on the letters of Farrukh-siyar to Husain Ali.

Another plot was hatched. Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Viceroy of the Deccan, was recalled and the province was put under the charge of Husain Ali. When Husain Ali

was on the way to the South, Daud Khan, Deputy Governor of the Deccan, was secretly instigated to obstruct him However, Daud Khan was defeated and killed and the plot failed

An attempt was made on the life of Saiyad Abdullah Khan under the very nose of the Emperor At the Nauroz ceremonies, the Wazir Abdullah Khan was to be surrounded and assassinated or imprisoned However, the plot miscarried Abdullah Khan came to know of the trap and overawed Farrukh-siyar by a large massing of the troops in advance

Prof S R Sharma writes, "In the face of such persistent dangers, the Sayyid Brothers would have been fools if they also did not make efforts to weaken, outwit or overawe their enemies " 'The result was that there were manoeuvres and counter-manoeuvres Farrukh-siyar tried one trusted noble after another to lay hold of Abdullah Khan while his brother Husain Ali was in the Deccan, but none had the courage to carry our his nefarious design Raja Ajit Singh, the father-in-law of Farrukh siyar, was called for help by the Emperor The Raja knew the character of his son-in-law He came to Delhi but he threw in his lot with Abdullah Khan Even Nizam-ul-Mulk and his cousin Muhammad Amin Khan turned against the Emperor When, the imperial officers were fighting against 'the rebellious Jats their chieftain Churaman Jat was helped secretly by Abdullah Khan

The relations between the Emperor and the Sayyid Brothers were very much strained There was an improvement for some time when Mir Jumla, the favourite of the Emperor, was sent away to Patna-and Husain Ali left for the Deccan as the Subedar of the six Subahs of the Deccan However, the fire of misunderstanding was fanned to full fury again when Mir Jumla came back from Patna and Nizam-ul-Mulk from the Deccan and

Inayatullah Kashmiri was appointed Diwan-i-Khalsa, much against the wishes of Sayyid Abdullah Khan The quest by Farrukh-siyar of a substitute for Abdullah Khan brought the quarrel to a head Abdullah Khan succeeded in weaning away from the side of the Emperor all his supporters He then sent express messages to his brother Husain Ali in the Deccan asking him to return to Delhi as quickly as possible

To provide against all eventualities, Husain Ali opened negotiations with Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath who demanded the recognition of Sahu's succession to Shivaji's kingdom, the right of levying Chauth and Sardeshmukhi on the six provinces of the Deccan, confirmation of recent Maratha conquests in Berar, Gondwana, Karnatak and the return of Sahu's mother and his family to the Deccan In lieu of those concessions, the Peshwa promised to pay a tribute or Peshkush for Sardeshmukhi, to preserve and guard peace in the Deccan and in return for Chauth place 15,000 Maratha horsemen at the disposal of Husain Ali As the terms were advantageous to both the parties, the bargain, was struck When those were placed before the Emperor, he rejected them When Husain Ali reached Delhi in 1719, he resolved to end the sorry state of affairs In his army were 11,000 Maratha troops led by Peshwa Balaji Vishwanath, Senapati Khande Rao Dabhade, Santaji Bhonsle and others The city was thrown into a state of alarm and so was the Emperor He made desperate efforts to undo the mischief by placating the Sayyid Brothers, but they were impervious to tears and threats alike The Emperor was completely isolated Even his father-in-law, Ajit Singh, deserted him The fort and palace in Delhi were cleared of the partisans of the Emperor who had taken refuge in women's compartments He was overpowered, dragged out, blinded and confined in a "bare, dark unfurnished hole"

He was subjected 'to all sorts of tortures by his jailors Bitter and over-salted dishes were served to him, Even slow poisoning was attempted for some time However, he survived At last, executioners were sent and they started him to death on 28 April 1719 This was the first instance of Mughal sovereign losing his life at the hands of a noble and the Sayyi Brothers had to pay for their crime with their blood

Farrukh-siyar was feeble, cowardly and contemptible and strong neither for evil nor for good and his attempt to assert his own power made his reign throughout art agitated and perplexing one, ending in another imperial tragedy" Again, "The way of doing what had become almost a necessity was unduly harsh, too utterly regardless of the personal dignity of the fallen monarch Blinding it deposed king was the fixed usage, for that the Sayyids are not especially to blame But the severity of the subsequent confinement was excessive and the taking of the captive's life was an extremity entirely uncalled for" Khafi Khan says, "Farrukh-siyar had no will of his own He was young, inexperienced in business and inattentive to business of state He had grown up in Bengal far away from his grandfather and father He was entirely dependent on the opinions of others for he had no resolution or discretion By the help of fortune, he had seized the crown The timidity of his character contrasted with the vigour of the race of Timur and he was not cautious in listening to the words of artful men" It is said of Farrukh-siyar that "like all weak men, he was swayed by the latest adviser and having resolved to do a thing could never hold to it long but soon sank into despair and went back on his undertakings Constitutionally incapable of governing by his own will and controlling others, he would not trust any able agent, but was easily inspired by a childish suspicion of his ministers and enticed to enter' into plots for their overthrow" Dr A L Srivastava

observes about Farrukh-siyar, "He had proved to be the most incapable ruler of the house of Babar bat had so far occupied the throne of Delhi "

It is worthy of notice that during the reign of Farrukh-siyar, the Mughal Empire drifted towards dissolution There was disorder everywhere Chiefs, landholders and leaders of tribal bands began to defy authority of the Government There were fights in the streets of Delhi among the followers of different nobles Roads became infested with thieves and robbers The Emperor himself set the example of misappropriating provincial revenues on their way to the imperial treasury and his example was followed by ambitious adventurers The orders of government began to be openly flouted Officers left their posts ion Rules and regulations were neglected Corruption prevailed As troops were not paid, they mutinied

Rafi-ud-Darajat

From the deposition of Farukh-siyar on 28 February 1719 to the accession of Muhammad Shah on 24 September 1719, three princes were raised to throne like bubbles of water rising to the surface, only to end ephemeral existence in a very short time

After the deposition of Farrukh-siyar, the Sayyid, Brothers raised to the throne a puppet named Rafi-ud-Darajat The Marathas were permitted to return to the Deccan They carried with them three Farmans granting the concessions demanded by them

The cruelty of the Sayyid Brothers towards Farrukh-siyar was resented by the people of Delhi Ajit Singh was subjected to insult and ridicule The rivals of the Sayyid Brothers set up Niku-siyar, another puppet Emperor, at Agra Added to that was the growing mistrust and rivalry between the Sayyid Brothers themselves Abdullah Khan favoured settlement with Niku-siyar but Husain Ali insisted

upon a fight with him and his view prevailed Meanwhile, the health of Rafi-ud-Darajat began to decline fast and on his suggestion the Sayyid Brothers raised to the throne his elder brother Rafi-ud-Daulah on 6 June 1719

Rafi-ud-Daulah

The new Mughal Emperor was virtually a prisoner in the charge of Sayyid Himmat Khan Barha He was not permitted to attend the Friday prayers, not to go out hunting nor even to converse with any nobles, except in the presence of his custodian He fell ill and died on 17 September 1719

Muhammad Shah (171948)

After the death of Rafi-ud-Daulah, Muhammad Shah was put on the throne by the Sayyid Brothers He was the fourth son of Emperor Bahadur Shah I It is said of him that never before a more carefree sovereign had sat on the throne of Delhi He was a young boy of 17 who had passed most of his time within the four walls of the palace, in the society of eunuchs and ladies of the harem None had cared for his education because none thought that he would sit on the throne of Delhi Though fairly intelligent, he never make use of his wits He was of a generous disposition He never gave his consent to the shedding of blood or doing harm to the creatures of God He was timid and wavering He was a lover of pleasure, indolent and addicted to loose habits He made it a rule of his life never to decide anything for himself He left that work for his favourites He readily listened to the advice of others without pausing to reflect upon the consequences of accepting it He had no initiative, nor even the dash of his predecessors He was utterly ignorant of the elementary rules of the game of politics and the pity was that he was not anxious to know them Rustam Ali writes, "Muhammad Shah was negligent of his duties, but the fact is that he did not know if he had any duties to perform "

Muhammad Shah took no interest in the affairs of the Government He spent his time in frivolous pursuits surrounded by favourites He left everything to his Wazir Qamar-ud-din Khan, son of Mir Muhammad Amin Khan Unfortunately, the Wazir was also an indolent, procrastinating and pleasure-loving person, Delhi was left without a Government The provincial governments got no help from the Centre in the hour of their need When Nadir Shah threatened Afghanistan and the Mughal Governor of Kabul asked for help, nobody cared for his request The leading nobles were jealous of the power of the Wazir and intrigued against the Mughal Empire with its enemies They shirked all military tasks involving any risk None of them was willing to face the Marathas They invented excuses when they were asked to proceed against the Raja of Jodhpur The results were disastrous The Mughal Empire began to disintegrate Many provinces virtually became independent Murshid Quli Khan in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa and Saadat Khan in Avadh paid only nominal allegiance to the Mughal Emperor at Delhi The Nizam set up an independent dynasty of his own in the Deccan In the Doah, the Rohillahas set up autonomous chieftainships The Marathas occupied Gujarat, Malwa and a part of Bundelkhand The Governors of Kabul and Lahore were left to then own resources

For about 13 years, Koki Jiu and her associates brought havoc in the kingdom She was authorised by Muhammad Shah to impress the official documents with the royal seal and extract money from all sources for him The regret of the Emperor was that he could not make her Wazir account of her sex Her four brothers were given high ranks Their total annual income from the Jagirs amounted to Rs 25 lacs Shah Abdul Ghafur, her companion, pillaged the public purse with, out fear or shame His income from Jagirs and other sources was

Rs 25,000 daily, apart from his equal share in the bribes with Koki Jiu he boasted that money was power which could control clouds and check the rains He got for his son a Mansab of 6000 and for himself a rare exemption from customary prostration in the court His son became a nuisance to the public He committed many acts of high-handedness The result was that both the father and son were hated There was a storm of protests against their activities and ultimately they were removed with great difficulty

Muhammad Shah spent most of his time in watching animal fights On account of his indifference towards public affairs and addiction to wine and women, he was called Muhammad Shah "Rangila"

The reign of Muhammad Shah can be divided into two periods, the dividing point being the invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739 The main interest in the political sphere centres round the steady expansion of Maratha power and influence and its pressure on Mughal territory They spread the network of their activity from Gujarat to Bengal and from the Narmada to the Jamuna, and even upto the river Ravi in the Punjab Their leader was Peshwa Baji Rao I It was under him that the Marathas cut across the limits of the Deccan and carried their arms right to the very heart of the Mughal Empire

Fall of the Sayyid Brothers

Muhammad Shah resented the authority of the Sayyid Brothers The leaders of the Turani faction, Nizam-ul-Mulk, Subedar of the Deccan Mir Muhammad Amin Khan, head of the Mughal soldiery and his cousin Abdus Samad Khan, Governor of Lahore, as well as the chiefs of the Irani faction were tired of the Sayyids and they decided to destroy them The Sayyid Brothers conciliated Jay Singh who never made a secret of his pro-Farrukh-siyar sympathy by assigning to him the Sarkar Sorath in the

Subah of Ahmedabad They suppressed and killed Budh Singh and seated their ally Bhim Singh oil the throne of Bundi They attempted to disperse the Turani group by sending away Nizam-ul-Mulk to Malwa They sent forces against Chhabela Ram, the rebellious Governor of Allahabad who was devoted to Farrukh-siyar On his death, his, nephew Girdhar Bahadur was persuaded to surrender Allahabad He was made the Governor of Avadh and was given Rs 330 lacs

After reaching Malwa, Nizam-ul-Mulk gave free play, to his ambitions He marched to the South, defeated and killed in two separate battles Dilawar Ali Khan and Alam Ali Khan and seized the Deccan Subah The Sayyid Brothers did not know what to do Abdullah did not trust Husain Ali and neither of the two could count upon the support of a few faithful supporters After prolonged discussion they decided that Abdullah should remain at Delhi and Husain Ali and the Emperor should go to the Deccan to deal with Nizam-ul-Mulk

Husain Ali and the Emperor left Delhi for the Deccan They chose the Ajmer route in the hope of meeting Raja Ajit Singh and reinforcing the imperial army by Rajput soldiers Nothing happened upto Agra but after that, the conspirators became more active, Mohammad Amin Khan, Qamar-ud-din Khan, Haidar Quli Khan, Mir Jumla, Sayyid Muhammad Amin and Saadat Khan started making schemes for 'the assassination of Husain Ali They won over the mother of the Emperor to their side On 8 October 1720, their plans were successful and Hasain Ali was stabbed to death This was followed by the arrest of Ratan Chand and Muhkham Singh Jat who were the supporters of Sayyid Abdullah A day after the murder of Husain Ali, the Emperor appointed Mohammad Amin Khan as Minister The other conspirators were also rewarded and given higher, ranks or offices The conspirators then marched against Sayyid Abdullah

Sayyid Abdullah demanded from the Emperor that the conspirators be punished but there was no response He set up a rival at Delhi in the person of Prince Ibrahim and proceeded to fight against the advancing imperial army, Abdullah was defeated in the battle of Hasanpur He was made a prisoner and handed over to the charge of Haidar Quli Khan He was poisoned and killed after two years

Sayyid Brothers

The Sayyid Brothers, Abdullah Khan and Husain Ali Khan, claimed their descent from Abdul Farh, an adventurer from Mesopotamia who had settled down in India many centuries ago The father of Sayyid Brothers was a Subahdar of Bijapur and Ajmer Later on, he joined Prince Muzzam During the war of succession, the Sayyid Brothers fought on the side of Prince Muazzam who became Mughal Emperor as Bahadur Shah The new Emperor rewarded the two brothers 1708, Prince Azim-us-Shan gave an important assignment to Husain in Bihar In 1711, he appointed Abdullah Khan as his Deputy in province of Allahabad In lieu of those favours, the Sayyid Brothers supported Farrukh-siyar a son of Azim-us-Shan, for the throne of Delhi They killed Emperor Jahandar Shah in the battle and offered the throne to Farukh-Siyar In recognition of the services rendered to him, Farukh-siyar appointed Abdullah Khan as Wazir and Husian Ali as Mir Bakshi That caused great jealousy in the minds of Turani and Irani nobles, who started instigating the Emperor to remove them The chief figure in the whole drama was Mir Jumla who had been authorised by Farukh-siyar to sign on his behalf That was resented by the Sayyid Brothers Khafi Khan writes, "The two, brothers were not inclined to bear patiently Mir Jumla's invidious and provoking interference in their affairs "

Farrukh-siyar took part in at least three plots against

the Sayyid Brothers The Emperor sent Husain Ali against the Rajputs but also sent secret instructions to Raja Ajit Singh to help him in getting rid of Husain Ali in return for tempting gifts The plot failed In the second Plot, the Emperor sent Husian Ali to the South as Subahdar of the Deccan and at the same time instigated Daud Khan to kill Husain Ali or the way He promised to hand over the viceroyalty of the Deccan to Daud Khan after the successful implementation of the plan The third plot was directed against the life of Abdullah Khan Abdullah Khan was to be surrounded and assassinated at the time of Nauroz ceremony However, Abdullah Khan got scent of the plot and posted a large number of troops to overawe Farrukh-siyar That plot also failed

The Sayyid Brothers joined hands with the Jats and also entered into an alliance with Raja Ajit Singh by making him promises of reward, Husain Ali Khan came to Delhi along with troops to help his brother The fort and the palace in Delhi were cleared of the supporters of Farrukh-siyar and he himself was dragged out from the harem, insulted and strangled

After the death of Farrukh-siyar, the Sayyid Brothers became the masters of the whole show They really became "'kingmakers" They put Rafi-ud-Darajat, Rafi-ud-Daulah and Muhammad Shah on the throne of Delhi As the new Emperor was young and inexperienced, he left the entire administration in the hands of the Sayyid Brothers Khafi Khan writes, "All the officers and servants around the Emperor were, as be fore, the servants of Sayyid Abdullah When the Emperor went out for a ride, he was surrounded, as with a halo, by a number of the Sayyid's adherents, and when occasionally he went out hunting or for an excursion into the country, they went with him and brought him back "

The Sayyid Brothers not only believed in but also

acted upon the policy of religious toleration It was under their influence and at their suggestion that the Jizya was abolished at the accession of Farrukh-siyar It was again on their suggestion that Mohammad Shah also abolished it The result was that the Sayyid Brothers were able to win over the sympathies of the Rajputs It was on their suggestion that Rattan Chand, a grain merchant, was appointed Diwan in place of Inayat Ullah Khan From a rebel, Raja Ajit Singh was won over and he agreed to give his daughter in marriage to Farrukh-siyar

Under the influence of Husain Khan, the Marathas were won over by granting them their demands Chauth and Sardeshmukhi The Sayyid Brothers mediated on behalf of Churaman Jat to allow him to retain his post on the condition of submitting to the Emperor Jai Singh who was besieging the Jat fort of Thuri was directed to raise the siege The result was that Churaman visited Delhi in April 1718 In order to Counteract the moves of the Turani and Irani nobles, the Sayyid Brothers formed the Hindustani party which consisted of Mohammadans born in India, Raiput and Jat chiefs and other powerful Hindu landowners It is contended that if the high officials had carried on the liberal policy of the Sayyid Brothers, the the course of Indian history would have been different

It is unfortunate that there were differences between the Sayyid Brothers They quarrelled over the sharing of the spoils of victory and political power They differed over the attitude to be adopted towards the old nobles in general and Nizam-ul-Mulk in particular, Husain Ali contended that Abdullah Khan had taken advantage of his position as Wazir and taken possession of all the buried treasures of Farrukh-siyar and the goods in his jewel house, imperial establishments etc He also maintained that Abdullah Khan had resumed the Jagirs of more than 200 nobles and distributed them among his followers There was great tension but a compromise was

arrived at through the good offices of Ratan Chand When Agra was captured, most of the booty fell into the hands of Husain Ali Trouble arose when Abdullah Khan demanded his share In spite of the intervention of Ratan Chand, Abdullah Khan was not satisfied

There were other differences between them Husain Ali was more energetic than Abdullah Khan He was of a haughty and hasty temperament and he failed to weigh all the pros and cons before coming, to a conclusion or taking action Khafi Khan writes that Husain Ali "deemed himself superior in military governmental matters to his brother though he was forgetful of the real matter and unacquainted with stratagem " Husain Ali overestimated the strength and stability of his own position and did not appreciate the wisdom and moderation of his brother The misfortunes of the Sayyid Brothers were very much due to the haste of Husain Ali in putting down the potential rivals The view of Abdullah Khan was that Nizam-ul-Mulk should be appointed the Governor of Bihar which province was notorious for its turbulent Zamindars and brought, practically no revenue, but Husain Ali insisted on the appointment of, Nizam-ul-Mulk to Malwa and the same was done It was from Malwa that Nizam-ul-Mulk was able to consolidate his position and raise the standard of revolt which ultimately led to the fall of the Sayyid Brothers

When Nizam-ul-Mulk was incharge of Malwa, it was reported that he was collecting men and materials of war in excess of his requirements as Governor of Malwa It was suspected that he had an eye on the Deccan The Sayyid Brothers were afraid of him and decided to shift him from Malwa to Agra or Allahabad or Multan or Burhanpur When Nizam-ul-Mulk did not accept the new offer, the Sayyid Brothers sent a macebearer to bring him to the capital Instead of obeying, he revolted and crossed the Narmada into the Deccan He was joined by

the Governors of Berar, Khandesh and Asirgarh In order to win over the Muslims to his side, he declared that whatever he was doing was for the honour and prestige of the royal house He had revolted because the Sayyid Brothers were determined to ruin and disgrace all, Turani and Irani nobles He also contended that the Sayyid Brothers had allied themselves with the Hindus and were pursuing anti-Islamic policies Those sentiments became the rallying cry of the movement against the Sayyid' Brothers led by the Nizam

Abdullah Khan realised the gravity of the situation He was in favour of winning over the Nizam by making concessions He was supported by Khan-i-Dauran and Ratan Chand However, Husain Ali rejected the proposal for a compromise and accused his brother Abdullah Khan of lack of initiative and courage Dilawar Ali was ordered to match against the Nizam from the North and Alam Ali from the South The Nizam fell upon Dilawar Ali and routed him in June 1720 before he was joined by Alam Ali Alam Ali and his Maratha supporters were also defeated by the Nizam in August 1720 Husain Ali was assassinated when he was on the way to the Deccan with the Emperor Abdullah Khan was defeated in the battle of Hasanpur and was taken prisoner He was killed two years after

The fall of the Sayyid Brothers was due to many causes They were not able to win over an important section of the old nobles belonging to the time of Aurangzeb and Bahadur Shah who looked upon the Sayyid Brothers as upstarts and were not prepared to be overshadowed by them in the conduct of the affairs of the state They did not approve of the policy of the Sayyid Brothers to conciliate the Marathas, Rajputs and Jats They were themselves ambitious people and could not be expected to tolerate the usurpation of all power by the Sayyid Brothers. They declared that the Sayyid Brothers

were anti-Mughal and wanted to monopolise all power into their hands

The Sayyid Brothers committed a blunder in deposing and murdering Farrukh-siyar Abdullah Khan was not in favour of deposing Farrukh-siyar and the blame must rest on the shoulders of Husain Ali The deposition of Farrukh-siyar created an apprehension in the minds of many nobles about the ultimate intentions of the Sayyid Brothers who came to be regarded as tyrants and traitors The deposition of Farrukh-siyar was a political blunder because it enabled the Chin group to appear as the champions of Timurid monarchy and exploit the public feeling against the Sayyid Brothers for their own ends

Another cause of their failure was that they overestimated their own strength and resources They should have followed a policy of caution and conciliation as advocated by Abdullah Khan It was the determination of Husain Ali to destroy Nizam-ul-Mulk, Amin Khan and others at the earliest possible moment that brought about the fall of the Sayyid Brothers The dependence of the Sayyid Brothers on their subordinates such as Ratan Chand, made them unpopular Their Government became corrupt They failed to maintain law and order They did not receive timely help from the Marathas, Rajputs and Jats

The Sayyid Brothers acted as king-makers and they brought about the deaths of Farukh-siyar and many other royal princes Those heinous crimes alienated the sympathies of the people and they did not get any support from them at the time of their crisis

Emperor Mohammad Shah highly resented the control of the Sayyid Brothers over him He was anxious to get rid of them In order to achieve his end, he joined the party opposed to the Sayyid Brothers, was an

important factor which brought about the fall of the Sayyid Brothers

As regards the work of the Sayyid Brothers, it is contended that if they had remained in power for long, they would have established a strong state on a national and tolerant basis with the support of Indian Muslims and Hindu Princes By establishing a strong state on a national and to Central Government, they would have avoided the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali They would have checked the rapid rise of the Marathas and the British in India They would have maintained the power and prestige of the Mughals intact The Mughal Emperor did not gain anything from the deaths of Husain Ali and Abdullah Khan He fell under the influence of evil counsellors and Nizam-ul-Mulk retired to the Deccan in disgust

The Sayyid Brothers exercised their influence on the Emperor to get the Jizya abolished in 1713 They cultivated cordial relations wit h the Hindus and offered them positions of trust They won over Raja Ajit Singh who was a rebel and succeeded in arranging a marriage between his daughter and Farrukh-siyar They also won over the jars and Marathas If the high officials had carried out the liberal policy of the Sayyid Brothers, the course of Indian history would have been different The Sayyid Brothers had certain qualities of their own Khafi Khan writes thus about the Sayyid Brothers, "In the course of this narrative, upon some points, the pen has been used to condemn the two brothers, the martyrs of misfortune, and this cannot now be rectified, but in atonement I will now write a few words upon the excellence and beauty of character, the love of justice and the liberality of both brothers Both the Brothers were distinguished in their day for their generosity and leniency towards all mankind The inhabitants of those countries which were innocent of contumacy and selfishness made

no complaint of the rule of the Sayyids In liberality and kindness to the learned men and to the needy and in protection of men of merit, Husain Ali excelled his elder brother and was the Hatim suited to his day Numbers owed their comforts to the cooked food and raw grain which he gave away At the time of the scarcity at Aurangabad, he appropriated large sum of money and a great quantity of grain to supply the wants of the poor and of widows The reservoir at Aurangabad was begun by him which, in summer, when water is scarce, relieved the sufferings of the inhabitants In their native country of Barha, they built Sarais, bridges and other buildings for the public benefit Sayyid Abdullah was remarkable for his patience and wise sympathy

The Sayyids made a definite break with narrow, exclusionist policy and moved in the direction of establishing a state essentially secular in approach and national in character Their downfall did not imply the automatic negation of this process which they had stimulated and strengthened, it continued to work apace and influenced the political and cultural developments of the succeeding period"

Nadir Shah's Invasion of India (1739)

One of the most important events of the reign of Muhammad Shah was the invasion of India by Nadir Shah in 1739 Nadir Shah had become the ruler of Iran in 1736 He was warlike and ambitious and keen to earn a name and fame and to raise his country to high glory He entertained aggressive designs both eastward and westward He came into, conflict with the Turks and sent his troops to punish the Governors of Balkh and Andkhud He then decided to conquer Qandhar which was the running sore to the security of his Eastern possessions and won remarkable success He captured Qandhar by storming his way into it in March 1738 He

had to pay heavily for his victory in Qandhar In his hour of triumph, financial stringency impeded his further conquests· In order to implement his future plans, Nadir Shah had to replenish his treasury as quickly as possible That could be done by invading India which was reputed to have enormous wealth With the spoils of India, he could raise and pay more the Afghan and Uzbeg levies and so renew war with Turks, besides by invading the Punjab, he would be following the example of Alexander the Great, Mahmood Ghazni and thereby merit the title of 'World Conqueror'

The immediate pretext for the invasion of India was the alleged disregard for Nadir Shah's repeated requests to the Mughal Emperor not to give asylum to the Afghan rebels Even after the siege of Qandhar had begun, the Mughal authorities did nothing to close the Western frontier against the refugees When the Persian envoy Muhammad Khan Turkman delivered in person the protest of his master to Muhammad Shah, instead of giving a straight reply, the envoy was unduly detained in spite of the explicit direction of Nadir Shah not to prolong his stay beyond 40 days, Muhammad Khan Turkman had been preceded by two other envoys who had brought similar requests but received evasive replies What infuriated Nadir Shah was the murder of two Persian couriers who had been sent to Delhi under escort to bring the news of Muhammad Khan Turkman

Nadir Shah used Qandhar as a vital base for his Indian expedition He arrived at Ghazni from where he marched to Kabul which he occupied after a brief resistance He professed his friendly intentions towards the Mughal Emperor saying that his sole object was to punish the rebel Afghans and he had no territorial designs He sent an envoy to Delhi but he was killed at Jalalabad Nadir Shah ruthlessly avenged the murder and sacked the town of Jalalabad

Nasır Khan, the Governor of Peshawar and Kabul, sent a note of warnıng to the Mughal Emperor and appealed for reınforcements The Mughal court was surcharged wıth ıntrıgues, neglect and ındıfference and hence no actıon was taken Nadır Shah left Jalalabad and marched towards Peshawar Nasır Khan by hıs own efforts collected 20,000 Afghans to meet the Persıan army Nadır Shah defeated them and Nasır Khan and a number of hıs officers were taken prısoners, Peshawar was occupıed A brıdge was constructed at Attock and the Persıan army crossed over to the other sıde The rıver Jhelum was crossed An Indıan army led by Qalandar Khan barred hıs advance but the general was kılled Zakarıyah Khan, the Mughal Governor of Lahore, made an abject surrender and by offerıng a gıft of Rs 20 lacs and several elephants, he saved hımself and the property and honour of the people of Lahore Nadır Shah stayed at Lahore for 12 days He appoınted Zakarıyah Khan of Lahore and Nasır Khan the Governor of Kabul and war Nadır Shah reached Sırhınd on 16 February 1739 From Sırhınd, he set out for Ambala From Ambala he marched to Azımabad to Karnal

The Mughal Emperor summoned Burhan-ul-Mulk Saadat, Khan from but dıd not waıt for hıs arrıval He ımmedıately held a councıl of war wıth Nızam-ul-Mulk, Khan-ı-Dauran and Itımad-ud-Daulah and the nobles should march, to Karnal The number of combatants ın the Indıan army at that moment was about 75000 Saadat wıth hıs troops but hıs baggage was plundered by the Persıans Saadat Khan attacked them A mınor actıon developed ınto the battle of Karnal The Persıans slaughtered a consıderable number of Saadat Khan's men Saadat Khan was wounded and taken prısoner Khan-ı-Dauran was fatally wounded

It appears strange that the Emperor Muhammad Shah, hıs Wazır Qamar-ud-dın and hıs advıser Nızam-ul-

Mulk should have complacently watched the terrible carnage which was going on before their very eyes The Indian left wing under their commands remained intact to the last without helping the hard-pressed imperial forces Either Nizam-ul-Mulk was taking a malicious pleasure in the humiliation of his two rivals or he considered it futile to fight against the superior tactics of Nadir, Shah Whatever the reason, his conduct could not be defended

When Saadat Khan was led into the audience of Nadir Shah, he tactfully answered the questions put to him, He impressed upon Nadir Shah that there were still vast resources at the disposal of Muhammad Shah with which he could continue the fight on equal terms and advised him to send for Nizam-ul-Mulk and negotiate with him The invitation was sent and Nizam-ul-Mulk accepted the invitation, went to the Persian camp and succeeded in negotiating a settlement with Nadir Shah According to the settlement, the Persian army was not to advance towards Delhi provided an indemnity of Rs 50 lacs was paid to Nadir Shah Out of that amount, 20 lacs were to be paid immediately--10 lacs at Lahore, 10 lacs at Attock and the balance at Kabul No territorial annexations were to be made The Mughal Emperor went, to the Persian camp where he was received with great honour and consideration

When the Emperor Muhammad Shah learnt of the death of Khan-i-Dauran, he immediately conferred on Nizam-ul-Mulk the rank and title of Amir-ul-Umara which the deceased Khan-i-Dauran had worn This was bitterly resented by Saadat Khan who had himself been coveting the post of Mir Bakshi Enraged at the preference shown to Nizam-ul-Mulk, Saadat Khan impressed upon Nadir Shah that he had been duped by Nizam-ul-Mulk who, would have agreed to pay much more. He suggested to him to take Mohammed Shah, the Nizam and others into custody, march to Delhi and make himself master of the

immense treasures in store there Nadir Shah accepted the suggestion Nizam-ul-Mulk was again invited to the Persian camp and was asked to furnish 20 crores of rupees in addition to 20,000 cavalry to serve under Nadir Shah When he pleaded his inability, he was placed under surveillance Likewise, the Emperor Muhammad Shah, Wazir Qamar-ud-din and the royal harem were also placed in custody Saadat Khan was elevated to the post of Vakil-i-Mutlaq and sent to Delhi with instructions to the Governor to hand over the keys of the imperial palaces and establishments

Nadir Shah and the Mughal Emperor left Karnal on 12 March 1739 On 20 March, Nadir Shah entered Delhi Nadir Shah took up his residence near the Diwan-i-Khas in the palace occupied by Shah Jahan On 21 March, the Khutba was read in all the mosques of Delhi in the name of Nadir Shah and coins were also struck in his name As Saadat Khan could not collect the large amount promised by him, he committed suicide

Unfortunately rumours were spread in the city that Nadir Shah had met with untimely death or had been seized or imprisoned by the orders of the Emperor Nobody cared to verify the truth Mobs collected at various places and attacked the Persian troops and about 3600 of them were killed At first, Nadir Shah refused to believe the reports of the disturbance but when he rode through the streets in Chandni Chowk, a bullet missed him but killed one of his officers Red with anger, he ordered a general massacre of the inhabitants of Delhi The Persian soldiers forced their way into shops, and houses killing the occupants and looting everything The money-changers Bazar and the shops of jewellers and merchants were set on fire and destroyed, all the occupants perishing in the flames No distinction was made between the innocent the guilty, male and female, old and young The massacre continued for about six

hours Sir Jadunath Sarkar puts the number of those dead at 20,000 besides several hundred women who committed suicide The streets of Delhi remained littered with corpses for several days till they were burnt with the timber from the wrecked houses, Nadir Shah obtained from the Emperor, his nobles and the people of Delhi about Rs 70 lacs, Nadir Shah demanded the hand of a Mughal princess for his son Nasrullah and a great granddaughter of Aurangzeb was married to him To celebrate the occasion, Nadir Shah ordered illumination, display of fireworks and other entertainments All this was done when the people of Delhi were in a state of mourning The Peacock throne of Shah Jahan was seized by Nadir Shah Likewise, elephants, horses and precious stuffs were seized

Nadir Shah left Delhi after a stay of 57 days Before his departure, he put the crown on the head of Muhammad Shah, the Mughal Emperor who offered to Nadir Shah the provinces of the Mughal Empire West of the river Indus from Kashmir to Sind and in addition the Subah of Thatta and the forts subordinate to it The view of Sir Wolseley Haig is that the departure of Nadir Shah left the Mughal Emperor and his courtiers stupefied with the blow which had fallen on them For two months, nothing was done or proposed in regard to the state of affairs in the Empire However, even this blow did not change the attitude of the Mughal Emperor and his courtiers

Nadir Shah marched out of Delhi on 16 May 1739 His long and richly-laden baggage train consisting of, besides costly jewels and cash, hundreds of camels, mules and elephants, was subjected to plunder and loot by the peasants of the Punjab Nadir Shah killed some of them but they would not desist It was in this manner that he returned home via Peshawar and Kabul

There is a difference of opinion among historians regarding the factors responsible for Nadir Shah's invasion of India Some attribute it to the nonobservance of the accepted standards of diplomatic niceties the part of Emperor Muhammad Shah who failed to felicitate Shah Tahmasp II on the occasion of his restoration Some put emphasis on lure of the Mughal Emperor to drive out the Afghans beyond the borders in spite of his promises

Another view is that the invitations of Saadat Khan and Nizam-ul-Mulk to Nadir Shah were responsible for the invasion Those who accuse the Mughal Emperor of lack of polite disposition and breach of faith, try to justify Nadir Shah's act of unprovoked aggression Some of the Afghans who had been defeated by Nadir Shah made their way into, India through diffitult passes and unknown roads and came into contact with those sections of the who were sympathetic towards them for their sufferings It is that some of the Afghans might have eluded the frontier guards India The Iranian officers could not puruse from beyond their own frontiers and Nadir Shah asked the Mughal Emperor to take steps to drive out the Afghan refugees from India The Mughal Emperor received Nadir Shah's embassies with every mark of respect, provided them with princely comforts and gave them lacs of rupees in the form of gifts He also Promised to take necessary action against the enemies of Nadir Shah He never asserted his claim over, Qandhar He did not oppose Nadir Shah when he was conquering it He gave no encouragement to Afghan resistance in Qandhar No official support was given to them to enter India However, any effort to chastise the Afghans meant the launching of a military expedition which he could not afford at a time when his own difficulties were on the increase On account of his continued war against the Marathas, the Mughal Emperor admitted his inability to meet the demands of Nadir Shah

The truth is that the obligation of repelling the Afghans was "beyond the capacity of his power and Government" The insistence of Nadir Shah on the expulsion of the Afghan refugees from India creates doubts about his real intentions to invade India It appears that Nadir Shah was using this as a pretext to prepare the ground for his invasion of India He was certainly aware of the limited resources of the Mughal Government and the serious crisis it was facing That situation encouraged Nadir Shah "to invade India and pave the way for another military success"

It is difficult to determine the number of Afghans who had taken shelter in India However, they were scattered and stripped of their resources and hence could not be a source of danger to Nadir Shah There could not be any apprehension that the Mughal Emperor in collusion with Afghan fugitives would be able to defy the might of Nadir Shah There is no truth in the assertion that the Mughal Emperor did not want to risk a break with the Afghans, and hence kept himself aloof from the war between Nadir Shah and the Afghans His active Participation was not called for as it had no direct bearing on his fortunes In the light of this fact, there is no element of truth in the Charge of breach of faith and lack of courtesy levelled against Muhammad Shah The real cause of his invasion of India was that Nadir Shah was, attracted by the fabulous wealth of India Prolonged war had made Persia virtually bankrupt Money was required to maintain the army

As regards the effect of Nadir Shah's invasion of India, it was in the nature of a holocaust There was wholesale destruction, plunder and rapine It gave a severe blow to the Mughal Empire It proved to be the harbinger of future invasions of India by Ahmad Shah Abdali It shook the nerves of many Indian politicians and statesman The French, the English and the Dutch

trading Companies were also frightened Peshwa Baji Rao was so alarmed that he asked Chimnaji Appa to give up his campaign against the Portuguese He made peace his enemy in Central India Raja Jay Singh of Amber sent his family to Udaipur By the invasion of Nadir Shah, the glamour and wealth of India which had dazzled even the foreigners, was gone Nizam-ul-Mulk was called away to the Deccan to meet the Maratha pressure on his possessions Saadat Khan was dead Qamar-ud-din Khan, on account of his indolence and licentiousness, was like a broken reed The youngmen who stepped into the political void were a band of self-seekers who were unfit to discharge their responsibilities in the prevailing atmosphere of strife and struggle

Nadir Shah's invasion gave a severe blow to the already tottering Mughal Empire and expedited the process of disintegration The quick victory of Nadir Shah demonstrated the hollowness of the authority of the Mughal Emperor and encouraged the Governors of the provinces to assert their independence The Mughal Emperor surrendered to Nadir Shah the territories lying to the West of the river Indus and that was a permanent loss to the Mughal Empire The Mughal Emperor lost not only the provinces of Western Punjab and Sind but also lost permanently Kabul which was annexed to Afghanistan

Nadir Shah's invasion paved the way for the future invasions of India from the North-West As a result of the loss of the territories to the West of the river Indus, the natural defence boundaries of the Mughal Empire were weakened and that made the job of future invaders of India easy The demonstration of the weakness of the Mughal Empire encouraged future invaders to come to India The complete political chaos and confusion which prevailed in North-West frontier after the invasion of Nadir Shah led to a series of foreign invasions after 1739 The

invasion also ruined the country financially Nadir Shah not only caused large-scale destruction of life and property but also carried away with him a lot of wealth from India Nadir Shah proceeded systematically and remorselessly to collect from all classes of population the wealth of Delhi, the accumulation of nearly three centuries and a half

According to Irvine, "Nadir Shah's occupation of Delhi and massacre of the people carried men's memories 300 years back to a similar calamity at the hands of Timur But there was a great difference between the results of these two foreign invasions Timur left the state of Delhi as he had found it, impoverished no doubt, but without any dismemberment Nadir Shah on the other hand, annexed the Trans-Indus provinces and the whole of Afghanistan and thus planted a strong foreign power constantly impinging on our Western frontier Timur's destructive work and the threat of further invasion from his country ended with his life But the Abdali and his dynasty continued Nadir's work in India as the heir to his Empire With the Khyber Pass and the Peshawar District in foreign hands, the Punjab became a starting point for fresh expeditions against Delhi"

The view of Dr Bisheshwar Prasad is that the defeat at the hands of Nadir Shah exposed the incapacity and lustful luxuriousness of the nobles who commanded the army It showed the inanity of the central authority with its factious and impotent jealousies in the court circles This exposure was a death-knell of the Empire, the central edifice which had kept the centrifugal forces in restraint The consequence was the disintegration of the Mughal Empire into a large number of provincial or local states which, while maintaining the facade of obedience to the crown, strengthened their autonomy The Central Government was reduced to a mere shadow, its authority scarcely prevailing beyond the suburbs of Delhi in time to

come " The effects of the invasion continued felt long after the departure of Nadir Shah The invasion pro the real weakness of the Mughal Empire to the entire world, particularly to the European adventurers who were gradually increasing their commercial activities and were watching the political situation in the country with keen interest The invasion of Nadir Shah demonstated forcefully that a new political situation had been created in India The loss of Kabul and the areas to the West of the deprived India of an advance post for the country's defence and vantage point for following West Asian affairs All the Indian powers including the Marathas were made aware that a new force had arisen in West Asia and the Indians could no longer bank on their North-West regions being safe from recurrent, foreign invasions Whether those invasions would be in the nature of plundering raids only or would also aim at the creation of a dynastic empire remained to be seen, The parties at the Mughal court were also affected by the invasion of Nadir Shah Among the old leaders, Saadat Khan and Khan-i-Dauran were dead Nizam-ul-Mulk and Qamar-ud-Din had forfeited the confidence of the Emperor for their sorry part in the battle of Karnal Nizam-ul-Mulk decided once again to leave the Mughal court and sought an agreement with the Marathas for maintaining his position in the Deccan Safdarjang, Amir Khan and a number of other nobles gradually rose into prominence The decline in the imperial prestige led to a resumption of the old struggle for Wizarat The wealth extorted by Nadir Shah from the Emperor, his nobles, the commercial classes and the citizens of Delhi represented a big drain on the resources of the country It not only dealt crippling blow to the power and authority of the Emperor who was left with no cash reserves for an emergency, but also affected the position of Delhi as one prime commercial mart of Northern India The general impoverishment of the nobles led to a sharpening of the struggle for the

possession of Jagirs The tendency, towards rack-renting of the peasantry became more marked The realisation of land revenue became more and more a kind of military operation and a large number of peasant were massacred The invasion of Nadir Shah also led to the introduction of the quick-firing musket and improved light artillery in India The Rohilla Afghans were the first to adopt them but the Marathas continued with very light cavalry warfare The rise of Nadir Shah and his invasion of India ended the close cultural contact between India and Persia which had subsisted between the two preceeding centuries The Indian frontier no longer marched with Iran and Turan so that the adventurers from these countries into India finally stopped It had an indirect bearing on India and its Social and cultural development The Irani and Turani immigrants who had settled down in India found it difficult to stand aside as a separate cultural and social group or to adopt an attitude of social and superiority The result was that the forces making for the creation of a composite culture and society in the country were strengthened in the long run

Ahmad Shah Abdali or Durrani was an important general of Shah Of him, Nadir Shah had once remarked, "I have not found in Iran, Turan or Hindustan any man equal to Ahmad Shah Abdali in capacity and character" When after the conquest of Qandbar, Nadir Shah decided to settle, all his Abdali subjects there, the relative Ahmad Shah also settled there After the murder of Nadir Shah 9 June 1747 by some of his nobles, all the Afghans proceeded towards Qandhar and chose Ahmad Shah Abdali as their leader On reaching Qandhar, they had to fight against the local garrison which was captured Ahmad Shah Abdali was declared Emperor and coins were struck in his name After Qandhar, he occupied Ghazni, Kabul and Peshawar All that added to his personal glory and the morale of his troops

When Nadır Shah had attacked Indıa ın 1739, Ahmad Shah Abdalı was wıth hım He saw wıth hıs own eyes the weakness of the Mu Emperor and the Empıre No wonder, he was tempted to attack Indıa to take advantage of the prevaılıng sıtuatıon

Ahmad Shah Abdalı led as many as seven expedıtıons agaınst ıt between 1748 and 1767 He undertook those ınvasıons maınly wıt vıew to establısh Afghan supremacy over Indıa There were many factors whıch encouraged hım to undertake those ınvasıons The weak and precarıous condıtıon of the Mughal Empıre encouraged hım, ın desıgns He had seen the weakness of the Mughal Empıre when came to Indıa alongwıth Nadır Shah

Ahmad Shah Abdalı crossed the Indus and the Jhelum to ınvade the Punjab ın 1748 Lahore and Sırhınd were occupıed but he was defeated the Mughal army near Sırhınd and was forced to wıthdraw Ahmad Shah Abdalı was not prepared to put up wıth the ınsult and he led another attack on Indıa ın 1749, Muın Khan, Governor of the Punjab, resısted the advance of Abdalı and asked for reınforcements As he dıd not get any help, he agreed to pay Rs 14,000 as annual trıbute to Abdalı

Ahmad Shah Abdalı led the thırd ınvasıon of Indıa towards the close of 1751 as the promısed trıbute was not paıd to hım, After defeatıng the Governor of the Punjab, Abdalı advanced towards Delhı The Mughal Emperor offered to transfer Multan and Punjab to Abdalı The vıew of some scholars ıs that Ahmad Shah Abdalı also conquered Kashmır durıng hıs thırd ınvasıon and appoınted hıs own Governor, He had to go back because there was the possıbılıty of opposıtıon at home that tıme

Ahmad Shah Abdalı ınvaded Indıa for the fourth tıme to punısh who had appoınted hıs own man as the Governor of the Punjab Ahmad Shah Abdalı had

appointed Mir Mannu is his agent and Governor of the Punjab In 1753, after the death of Mir Mannu, his infant son, under the Regency of his mother Mughlani Begum, succeeded him In May 1754, even this successor of Mir Mannu died After that, there was chaos and confusion in the Punjab Mughlani Begum invited, Imad-ul-Mulk, the Wazir of Delhi and he appointed Mir Munim the Governor of the Punjab after imprisoning Mughlani Begum When Ahmad Shah Abdali came to know of these developments, he deed to attack India He came to India in November 1756 As soon as he reached Lahore, Mir Munim ran away to Delhi After capturing the Punjab, Ahmad Shah Abdali marched towards Delhi He reached Delhi on 23 January 1757 and captured the city, He stayed in Delhi for about a month and repeated the carnage, and arson of the type of Nadir Shah's invasion The rich and poor, noblemen and commoners, men and women, all suffered torture and disgrace indiscriminately

After pillaging Delhi, the Afghan army marched out leaving a trail of burning villages, rotting corpses and desolation Crushing the Jats on the way, they proceeded to Mathura, Brindaban and Gokul The carnage and destruction that visited these sacred towns beggars description For 7 days following the general slaughter, "the water (of the Jamuna) flowed of a blood-red colour" Temples were desecrated, priests and Sadhus were put to the sword Women were dishonoured and children were cut to pieces There was no atrocity which was not perpetrated

The cry of anguish which arose from Delhi, Mathura, Agra and a thousand towns and villages in Northern India remained unheard However, the outbreak of cholera halted the Afghan army The soldiers clamoured for returning home Abdali was forced to retire but not before he had collected a booty estimated at 3 to 12 crores of rupees and inflicted unspeakable indignities upon the

Mughal Emperor Before his departure from Delhi, Abdali compelled the Mughal emperor to cede to him Kashmir, Lahore, Sirhind and Multan He appointed his son Timur Shah to look after the government of those regions Mughlani Begum was not given Kashmir or Jullunder Doab which had been Promised to her She was imprisoned, caned and disgraced Abdali appointed Najib Khan Rohilla as Mir Bakshi and he remained in Delhi as the agent of Ahmad Shah

After the departure of Abdali, the situation in India became critical Najib Khan was forced to leave Delhi along with all his men and Ahmed Bangash was appointed Mir Bakshi in his place Najib Khan complained to Abdali and asked for a fresh invasion by him Sirhind and Lahore fell into the hands of the Marathas in 1758 Abdali sent Jahan Khan to the Punjab but he was defeated, When that happened, Abdali himself attacked India The Marathas could not stand against him and were forced to withdraw from Lahore, Multan and Sirhind Before the end of 1750, the Punjab was once again brought under his control by Abdali

Abdali was full of anger against all those who had dared to defy his authority He rushed to the Doab He fought against Dattaji and defeated and killed him Malharrao was able to escape with great difficulty, The Peshwa took up the challenge and sent Sadasiva Rao Bhau to the North in 1760 Many other Maratha generals were sent to fight against Abdali The Marathas had not a single friend or ally in the North on account of their previous treatment of the Rajputs, Jats and others There were differences within their own ranks in regard to the tactics to be employed against Abdali The only success of their army was their entry into Delhi because Ahmad Shah Abdali was campaigning in the Doab The Marathas were forced to leave Delhi on account of scarcity of food for men and horses It was under these circumstances

that the third battle of Panipat was fought on 14 January 1761 between the Marathas and Ahmad Shah Abdali In spite of their best efforts, the Marathas were defeated Holkar fled and the contingents of Sindhia followed him The defeat turned into a rout and terrific slaughter ensued On the battlefield, there lay the, corpses of 28,030 men Most of the officers were killed Both Vishwas Rao, the son of the Peshwa and Sadasiva Rao Bhau died fighting heroically,

The defeat at Panipat was a disaster of the first magnitude but it was by no means decisive For Abdali, it was an empty victory As soon as his back was turned, his conquests fell to pieces He and his successors were pestered by rebellions at home They were not able to give adequate support to their agents in India The Sikhs drove out the Afghan officers and plundered their baggages In a few years, not a trace of Abdali's conquest was left on this side of the Indus The Marathas received a severe blow but within ten years they were back in the North, acting as the guardians of the Mughal Emperor Shah Alam whom they escorted from Allahabad to Delhi in 1771 The defeat of Panipat was not conclusive The battle which was really decisive was the battle of Plassey which was fought in 1757

After the battle of Panipat, Ahmad Shah Abdali recognised Shah Alam II as the Emperor of Delhi Munir-ud-Daulah and Najib-ud-Daulah promised to pay a tribute of Rs 40 lacs per annum to Ahmad Shah Abdali on behalf of the Mughal Emperor After that Ahmad shah Abdali left India

Ahmad Shah Abdali came to India for the sixth time in March 3764 The Sikhs had increased their power in the Punjab They had captured considerable property and also killed Khawaja Abid, the Afghan Governor of Lahore The object of Abdali's invasion was to punish the Sikhs

He stayed in India only for about a fortnight He had to retreat in view of the possibility of a revolt among his soldiers As soon as Ahmad Shah Abdali left India, the Sikhs captured Lahore They also captured Majha and Central Punjab However, Abdali was able to retain his control over Peshawar and the country West of Attock

As regards the effects of the invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali, it is true that Abdali could not stay in India for a long time on the occasion of any of his invasions and he had to hurry back to his country for one reason or the other, but in spite of that his invasions had many effects on the history of India One of the effects of his invasions was that they paved the way for the rise of the Sikh power in the Punjab From 1752 to 1761, there were frequent wars among the four great powers to gain ascendancy in the Punjab viz, the Durranis, the Mughals, the Marathas and the Sikhs The invasions of Abdali so much weakened the Mughal Empire that he was able to take away the two provinces of the Punjab and Sind from the Mughal Empire Ahmad Shah Abdali defeated the Marathas in 1761 in the third battle of Panipat The result was that the Marathas lost an opportunity to set up their Empire in the Punjab After the elimination of the Mughals and the Marathas from the Punjab, only the Afghans and the Sikhs remained in the field Inspite of his many invasions, Abdali was not able to crush the Sikhs of the Punjab which was occupied by the Sikhs In this way the invasions of Abdali paved the way for the rise of the Sikh power in the Punjab It is rightly said that the career of Ahmad Shah Abdali in India "is very intimately a part of the Sikh struggle for independence"

The attempts of the Marathas to oust the Afghans from Delhi and the Punjab ended in the catastrophe to themselves and not to the Mughal Empire The latter had already ceased to exist in 1759 What was accomplished by the third battle of Panipat in 1761 was that the dream

of the Marathas to establish a Hindu Empire from the Deccan right upto the Punjab came to nothing After their defeat in 1761, the Marathas had to face a lot of difficulty before they could recover the deadly effects of the battle of 1761 Their prestige fell down very low The charm of their invincibility was gone The organisation and authority of the Marathas became weak and their enthusiasm and initiative practically died out

In the middle of eighteenth century, two powers clashed with each other was in India One was the declining power of the Mughals and second was the rising power of the Mughals and second was the rising power of the Marathas The third battle of Panipat in 1761 weakened the Mughals and the Marathas to such an extent that the English people came forward as the legal heirs to the Mughal Empire The invasions of Nadir Shah had given a rude shock to the Mughal Empire by depriving it of Sind, Kabul and the Western Punjab and by giving an opportunity to the other nobles to become independent The invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali put an end to the Mughal Empire and frustrated the attempts of the Marathas to establish a Hindu Empire in India by crushing their power in the third battle of Panipat In other words, the invasions of Abdali prepared the field for the British to establish their authority because the Marathas and the Muslims had considerably, weakened each other on account of their deadly conflict Thus the significant result of the invasions of Nadir Shah and Ahmad Shah Abdali was the rise of the English power in India

Ahmed Shah (1748-1754)

After the death of his father Muhammad Shah Rangila in April 1748, Ahmed Shah was put on the throne of Delhi He was the only son of his father He was "good natured imbecile" who had received no training for war or administration "From his infancy to the age of 21, he had

been brought up among the women of harem in neglect and poverty and often subjected to his father's brow-beating ” According to the writer of Tarikhi-i-Alamgir Sani, “Ahmed Shah was not a man of great intellect, all the period of his youth till manhood had been spent in the harem and he had absolutely no experience whatever of the affairs of a kingdom or of the cares of the Government Besides these, he was surrounded by all sorts of youthful pleasures which every person, seeing the turn of his mind, was anxious to display before him to entice his fancy As a natural consequence, he gave himself up entirely to pastime and sports, and bestowed no thought on the weighty affairs of the kingdom To manage a country and wield a sceptre is a matter full of difficulty, and until an Emperor understands thoroughly himself the good and had tendency of every measure, he cannot be fit for rule For this reason, Ahmed Shah was unable to govern the Empire entrusted to him ” Again, “He gave himself up to useless pursuits, to pleasure and enjoyment, and his reign was brought to an end after six years, three months and nine days by the enmity which he showed to Nizam-ul-Mulk, Asaf Jah ”

The affairs of the state fell into the hands of “a cabal of eunuchs and women” headed by the Queen mother Udham Bai, who before her marriage with Muhammad Shah, was a public dancing girl She promoted worthless men into high offices, receiving large presents in money for every appointment No one cared for the administration and the Governors and nobles misappropriated the royal revenues Their example was followed by powerful landlords who usurped the lands of their weak neighbours

Ahmed Shah excelled his predecessors in his sensual pursuits His harem extended over a full Kos wherefrom all males were excluded and the Emperor spent a week and sometimes a month in the company of

those women In the field of administration, the Emperor did many foolish things He appointed his 2½ year old son Mahmud as the Governor of the Punjab and named Muhammad Amin, a one year old boy, as the Deputy under him The Governorship of Kashmir was conferred on Tala Said Shah, a one year old boy and a boy of 15 years of age was appointed his deputy Those appointments were made at a time when the danger of Afghan invasions was very great

Ahmed Shah favoured Javid Khan, his chief eunuch who became the leader of the court party Javid Khan came to be known as Nawab Bahadur and he dominated the whole of the administration He plotted against the Wazir Safdarjang There was utter confusion in the country In 1749, Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded the Punjab but retired after getting a heavy indemnity In 1752, Abdali attacked the Punjab again The Governor of the Punjab was defeated and Abdali marched towards Delhi With a view to avoid destruction at Delhi, the Mughal Emperor made peace by ceding the Punjab and Multan to Ahmad Shab Abdali

Delhi became a hot bed of intrigues and rival factions The most important Minister at the court at that time was Safdarjang, the Nawab Wazir of Avadh He became so arrogant that he began to give orders without consulting the Emperor The Emperor retaliated by forming a court party headed by Javid Khan When Javid Khan was assassinated, the Mughal Emperor chose Ghazi-ud-Din Imad-ul-Mulk, grandson of Nizam-ul-Mulk, as his Wazir There was a struggle for power between Imad-ul-Mulk and Safdarjang Ghazi-ud-Din convened the Mughal Darbar and proposed the following resolution "This Emperor has shown, is unfitness for rule He is unable to cope with the Marathas. He is false and fickle towards his friends Let him be deposed and a worthier son of Timur raised to the throne" The resolution was

passed and immediately acted upon Ahmed Shah was deposed and blinded and to the state prison of Salimgarh Alamgir II was put on the throne

Alamgir II (1754-59)

Alamgir II was the second son of Jahandar Shah He was 55 at the time of his accession to the throne As he had pent almost all his life in prison, he had practically no experience of administration He was a very weak person and was merely a puppet in the hands of his Wazir Ghazi-ud-Din Imad-ul-Mulk The Wazir was a man of no principles He was extremely selfish He put all the royal revenues into his own pocket and starved the royal family He persecuted Ali Gauhar, the eldest son of the Mughal Emperor He tried to form an anti-Maratha coalition with a view to drive out the Marathas from Northern India but he failed The relations between Alamgir II and Imad-ul-Mulk were not satisfactory and the latter got him assassinated in 1759 His body was thrown out of the window and was found lying stark naked on the banks of the river Jamuna

Shah Alam II (1759-1806)

Ali Gauhar was the son of Alamgir II He became the Mughal Emperor in 1759 and took up the title of Shah Alam II At the time of the death of his father, he was in Bihar Although he was declared the Mughal Emperor, he did not proceed to Delhi for 12 years He reached Delhi in January 1772 with the help of the Marathas During that period, he tried to conquer Bihar and Bengal but failed He was defeated in 1764 in the Battle of Buxar and made a prisoner along with the Nawab Wazir of Avadh In 1765, he gave the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the English East India Company and the latter promised to pay him an annual sum of Rs 26 lacs

Throughout his long life, Shah Alam II remained a puppet in the hands of his ministers, the Marathas and

the British The Rohilla leader Najib-ud-Daulah and later on his son Zabita Khan and grandson Ghulam Qadir ransacked the palace, The floors of the houses of the grandees in the city were dug out The princesses were turned out and their jewellery as snatched by Ghulam Qadir, Ghulam Qadir, also blinded Shah Alam and deposed him and put Bidar Bakht on the Mughal throne However, the Marathas brought our Shah Alam from his captivity and restored him to the throne Ghulam Qadir was defeated and hanged In 1803, the English captured Delhi and Shah Alam II became a pensioner of the English East India Company and he died in 1806

It is said about Shah Alam II that he was a religious man He was affectionate as a father and humane as a master As a prince, he was weak, indolent, irresolute and easily swayed by self-interested men To these weaknesses were added idleness, superstitiousness, sloth, indolence and excess of the harem after his return to Delhi He was indecisive in his measures and did not trust his able ministers These failings aggravated the situation and the Mughal Empire hastened to its doom

Akbar II (1806-37)

After the death of Shah Alam II, his son succeeded as Akbar II Like his father, he was also a pensioner of the British He was the bead of the royal establishment in the Red Fort of Delhi and enjoyed the imperial title only by courtesy He died in 1837

Bahadur Shah II (1837-57)

After the death of Akbar II, Bahadur Shah II became the Emperor He was allowed to retain the imperial title He was fond of poetry and had the title of "Zafar," He took part in the Revolt of 1857 He was captured and tried by the British He was deported to Rangoon where he died in 1862 Thus ended the Mughal dynasty

Causes of the downfall of the Mughals

The downfall of the Mughal Empire was not due to any single factor but was the result of a combination of a number of factor" According to certain scholars, the decline of the Mughal Empire was largely due to the policies and character of Aurangzeb Aurangzeb alienated the sympathy and support of the Hindus by his religious policy towards them He imposed Jizya on all the Hindus in the country Even the Rajputs and Brahmans were not spared He dismissed Hindu officials from state service and allowed only those Hindus to continue in service who were prepared to embrace Islam An order banning the building of new Hindu temples in the areas directly under Mughal control was promulgated early in his reign Though, old temples were not to be destroyed under that order, it was decreed that the, temples built since the time of Akbar should be treated as newly built temples and on that plea these temples were desecrated in parts of the Mughal Empire Those temples included the temples of Vishwanath at Kashi and Bir Singh Deo at Mathura In 1679 when the State of Marwar was under direct imperial control and the Rajputs prepared themselves to resist Mughal authority old as well as new temples were destroyed in different parts, of the Empire Thousands of artisans and labourers were employed to pull down Hindu temples and mosques were built with the material of those temples After the death of Raja Jaswant Singh, Aurangzeb tried to keep his son Ajit Singh under his control Durga Das Rathore managed to remove him and his mother to Rajputana in spite of all the precautions taken by Aurangzeb That led to the Rajput War which continued from 1679 to 1681 Although peace was restored, Aurangzeb could not depend upon the Rajputs It proved to be a great handicap during his Deccan watt Instead of depending upon the support of the Rajputs, he had to set apart Mughal troops to meet any possible trouble from them The execution of Guru

Teg Bahadur was a blunder of Aurangzeb That led to the alienation of the Sikhs who became a strong military power under Guru Gobind Singh Later on, those very Sikhs gave trouble to the Mughal Emperors Although Banda was captured and put to death, Sikh resistance was not crushed It kept on growing day by day and ultimately the Sikhs were able to drive out the Mughals from the Punjab The same policy of religious persecution led to the rise of the Marathas under Shivaji The persecution of the Hindus hardened their character and they became the bitter enemies of the Mughals LaneoPoole writes about Aurangzeb, "His mistaken policy towards Shivaji provided the foundation of a power that was to prove a successful rival to his own Empire " According to V A Smith, "The powerful Hindu support of the throne won so cleverly by Akbar, was weakened by the erroneous policy of Shah Jahan and in a still greater degree, by the austere fanaticism of Aurangzeb

In defence of the religious policy of Aurangzeb, it is contended that Aurangzeb never intended to Hindus to accept Islam As an Orthodox Muslim King, he wanted to rule in accordance with the Orthodox interpretation of the Holy Quran While re-imposing Jizya, he formally abolished 80 taxes not sanctioned by, Islamic law Aurangzeb wanted to emphasize the Islamic character of the state and to rally the Muslims closely round the throne However, he did not realise that his policy would lead to a strong reaction among the Hindus and alienate such sections as the Rajputs who had been generally loyal to the Mughal throne The reign of Aurangzeb witnessed armed resistance from many quarters The Jars revolted in 1669 and 168891 The Satnamis revolted, in 1672 Sikh and Maratha resistance continued not only during the reign of Aurangzeb but even after that

The Deccan policy of Aurangzeb was also responsible for the downfall of the Mughal Empire, Aurangzeb was bent upon crushing the power of the Marathas He found that the states of Bijapur and Golcunda were a source of great help to the Marathas who were employed in large numbers in those states They got not only money but also military training from those states, The conclusion of Aurangzeb was that if those states were annexed to the Mughal Empire, the source strength of the Marathas would be stopped Moreover, the rulers of those states were Shias and for a fanatical Sunni Muslim like Aurangzeb, their very existence was intolerable, Aurangzeb annexed Bijapur in 1686 and Golcunda in 1687 He might have claimed credit for the destruction to the Shia states but he had committed a blunder He should have followed a buffer state policy towards them and subordinated his religious zeal to statesmanship If Aurangzeb had helped Bijapur and Golcunda against the Marathas, he would have been able to keep the Marathas in check with much less expense and waste of energy and resources

After the annexation of Bijapur and Golcunda, Aurangzeb tried to crush the power of the Marathas War was declared against Sambhaji, the son, of Shivaji, He was captured and put to death under the orders of Aurangzeb His, son, Sahu, was captured and made a prisoner He continued to be in prison till the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, However, the Marathas carried on their struggle against Aurangzeb first under she 'leadership of Raja Ram and after his death, his widow Tara Bai When Aurangzeb died in 1707 the power of the Marathas was still not 'crushed As a matter of fact, they were stronger than before

About the Deccan policy of Aurangzeb, V A Smith observes, "The Deccan was the grave of his reputation as well as of his body" Aurangzeb had to remain away

from Northern India for a quarter of a century on account of his involvement in, the wars in the Deccan 'The result was that the whole of Mughal administration was thrown out of gear There was complete confusion everywhere As tire Emperor was busy in the Deccan, the provincial Governors did not send land revenue to the Central Government At a time when more money was required for the wars in the Deccan, very little was coming from the provinces When Bahadur Shah succeeded to the throne, the treasury was empty The Mughal Government being a centralised despotism, the absence of Aurangzeb from the North for a long period encouraged centrifugal tendencies among the Governors After the death of Aurangzeb, those tendencies continued to grow and the result was that ultimately the various provinces became independent It was in this way that Avadh, Bengal, the Punjab and the Deccan became independent The Rohillas became independent in Rohilkhand The Jats also asserted their independence Gradually, the Mughal Empire broke up The failure of Aurangzeb in the Deccan wars destroyed the military prestige of the Mughals Too much of expenditure made the Mughal Government bankrupt

It was a mistake on the part of Aurangzeb not to have come to terms with Shivaji or Sambhaji Although Aurangzeb gave high ranks (Mansabs) to a large number of Maratha Sardars (chiefs), he had no following among the Marathas The conflict with the Marathas had far-reaching consequences The military prestige of the Mughals was damaged The Mughals were prevented from consolidating their position in the Deccan A feeling of tension was created among the Hindus and Muslims A considerable harm was done to trade and industry on the Western coast and in the Deccan

Aurangzeb was a man of suspicious nature He did not trust even his sons and relatives That is why he kept

the whole of the administration under his Personal supervision That deprived his sons of the necessary training in the art of administration and practical experience in the art of statesmanship and diplomacy As it was difficult for one man sitting at the Centre to control the whole of administration personally, the whole of the administration fell a prey to corruption and inefficiency, especially when the means of transport and communication, were not fully developed in those days" Any attempt on the part of a single individual to control the vast Empire was destined to failure Even during the lifetime of Aurangzeb, it was not possible to control the entire administration personally, but after his death, there was disorder, confusion and chaos

Under Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire became unwieldy With the conquest and annexation of Bijapur and Golcunda, it became so huge in size and extent that it was difficult to keep it intact The means of transport and communication during those days were not developed and hence the maintenance of the central control over the distant parts of the Empire was a difficult problem Rebellions in distant provinces were often witnessed even during the lifetime of Aurangzeb who was admittedly a strong man Under his weak successors, it became impossible to maintain control over the distant provinces which, one by one, drifted away from the control of the Central Government Saadat Ali Khan became independent in Avadh, Ali Vardi Khan declared his independence in Bengal, Bihar and Orissa The Rohillas and the Rajputs took advantage of the weakness of the distant Central Government and set up their independent states in their own regions Nizam-ul-Mulk set up his own independent state in the Deccan

Another cause of the downfall of the Mughal Empire was the financial bankruptcy of the Mughal Government for which Aurangzeb alone was not responsible, although

he contributed to it and did nothing to check it It is true that Akbar had set up a well-organised economic em but the same was not maintained by his successors The economic em of the Empire was strained, almost to, the breaking point, by the of the reign of Shah Jahan on account of his extravagance on the construction of magnificent buildings and palaces He increased the demand of land revenue to one-half The long, expensive and wars of Aurangzeb in the Deccan and the North-West Frontier the treasury After the death of Aurangzeb, the system of farming of taxes was resorted to Although the Government did not get taxes was resort "by that method, the people were ruined The financial collapse in the time of Alamgir II who was practically starved by his Imad-ul-Mulk It is stated that Alamgir II had no conveyance to take him to the Idgah and he had to walk on foot Sir Jadunath points out that on one occasion, no fire was kindled in the royal kitchen for three days and one day the princesses could bear starvation no longer and in frantic disregard of Purdah rushed out of the palace to the city The gates of the fort being closed, they sat down in the men's quarters for a day and a night after which they were persuaded to go back to their rooms That happened in 1775 The continuance of such a Government was not possible

Another cause of the downfall of the Mughal Empire was the weak successors of Aurangzeb If they had been intelligent and brilliant, they may have stopped the decline of the Empire which had set in during the reign of Aurangzeb Unfortunately, most of them were worthless, They were busy in their luxuries and intrigues and did nothing to remedy the evils which had crept into the Mughal body politic Bahadur Shah I was 63 when be ascended the throne and he did not possess the energy to perform the onerous duties of Government He tried to keep the various parties and courtiers satisfied by offering

the whole of the administration under his Personal supervision That deprived his sons of the necessary training in the art of administration and practical experience in the art of statesmanship and diplomacy As it was difficult for one man sitting at the Centre to control the whole of administration personally, the whole of the administration fell a prey to corruption and inefficiency, especially when the means of transport and communication, were not fully developed in those days" Any attempt on the part of a single individual to control the vast Empire was destined to failure Even during the lifetime of Aurangzeb, it was not possible to control the entire administration personally, but after his death, there was disorder, confusion and chaos

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kingmakers It is not incorrect to say that the absence of a law of succession led to frequent wars of succession and contributed to the decline of the Mughal Empire

Another cause was the gradual deterioration in the court of the Mughal kings When Babar attacked India, he swam all the rivers on the way He was so strong that he could' run on the wall of a fort while carrying man in his arms Unmindful of the difficulties confronting him, Humayun was able to win back his throne after the lapse of many years The same hardy character enabled Akbar to conquer the whole of Northern India and a part of the Deccan No amount of riding on horseback exhausted him He could walk miles and miles on foot He is said to have walked from Agra to Delhi He could kill a lion with one stroke of his sword After the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Emperors became ease-loving Their harems were full They went about in palanquins They were hardly fit to rule a country where the mass of the people detested their rule Kam Baksh as a captive on his deathbed regretted that a descendant of Timur was captured alive

There was the degeneration of the Mughal nobility When the Mughals came to India, they had a hardy character Too much of wealth, luxury and leisure softened their character Their harems became full They got wine in plenty They went in palanquins to the battlefield Such nobles were not fit to fight against the Marathas, the Rajputs and the Sikhs The Mughal nobility degenerated at a very rapid pace Sir Jadunath Sarkar writes that no Mughal noble family retained its importance for more than one or two generations If the achievements of a nobleman were mentioned in three pages, the achievements of his son occupied nearly a page and the grandson was dismissed in a few lines such as "he did nothing worthy of being recorded here" The Mughal nobility was taken from the Turks, the

Afghans and the Persians and the climate of India was not suitable for their growth They began to degenerate during their stay in India

The truth of this argument is challenged It is pointed out that there is no reason to believe that the people belonging to colder climates are better warriors Among the many well-known administrators and distinguished warriors produced by the Mughal Empire, there were many Hindustanis and immigrants who had lived in India fora long time The eighteenth century also produced a large number of capable nobles and distinguished generals Their personal ambitions were unlimited and they preferred to carve out independent principalities for themselves rather than serve the Mughal Emperors loyally and devotedly The chief reason for the degeneration of the nobility was that g of gradually it became a closed corporation It gave no opportunity promotion to capable men belonging to other classes as had been state became hereditary and the people belonging to a few families Another reason was their incorrigible habit of extravagant living and pompous display which weakened their morale and drained their limited financial resources Most of the nobles spent huge sums on keeping large harems, maintaining a big staff of servants etc , and indulged in other forms of senseless show The result was that many of the nobles became bankrupt in spite of their large Jagirs Dismissal from service or loss of Jagirs spelt ruin for most of them That prompted many of them to form groups and factions for securing large and profitable Jagirs Others turned themselves into g tyrants who mercilessly fleeced the peasants of their Jagirs Many nobles became ease-loving and soft They dreaded war and became accustomed to an extravagant way of life that they could not do without many of the luxuries even when they were on military campaigns

The mughal nobility was corrupt and faction-ridden By giving suitable bribes, any Government rule could be evaded or any favour secured The interests of the Mughal Empire did not appeal to them The British regularly bribed Mughal nobles for getting their work done Even the highest nobles took bribes which were called Peshkash or presents That lowered the tone of administration, With the passage of time, corruption and bribery increased Later on, even some of the Mughal Emperors shared the money which their favourites charged as Peshkash from people desirous of getting a post or seeking a transfer Factionalism kept on growing till it extended to all branches of administration The two major causes of factionalism were struggle for Jagirs and personal advancement and struggle for supremacy between the Wazir and the monarch Thus faction fights weakened the monarchy, gave a chance to the Marathas, Jats etc , to increase their power and to interfere in the court politics and prevented the Emperors from following a consistent policy Factionalism became the most dangerous, bane of the Mughal rule from 1713 onwards To save themselves from these faction fights, the Mughal Emperors depended upon unworthy favourites and that worsened the situation,

Sir Jadunath Sarkar writes, "All the surplus produce of a fertile land under a most bounteous Providence was swept into the coffers of the Mughal nobility and pampered them in a degree of luxury not dreamt of even by kings in Persia or Central Asia Hence, in the houses of the Delhi nobility, luxury was carried to an excess, The harems of, many of them were filled with a large number of women of an infinite variety of races, intellect and character Under Muslim Law the sons of concubines are entitled to their matrimony equally with sons born in wedlock, and they occupy no inferior position in society, Even the sons of lawfully married wives became, at a

precocious age, familiar with vices from what they saw and heard in the harem, while their mothers were insulted by the higher splendour and influence enjoyed in the same household by younger and fairer rivals of servile origin or easier virtue The proud spirit and majestic dignity of a Cornelia are impossible in the crowded harem of a polygamist, and without Cornelias among the mothers there cannot be Grachhi among the sons "

Another cause of Mughal downfall was the deterioration and demoralisation in the Mughal army The abundance of riches of India, the use of wine and comforts had their evil effects on the Mughal army and nothing was done to stop the deterioration. The soldiers cared more for personal comforts and less for winning battles In the words of Irvine, "Excepting want of personal courage, every other fault in the list' of military vices may be attributed to the degenerate Mughals, indiscipline, want of cohesion, luxurious habits, inactivity and commissariat and cumbrous equipment " The impotence of the Mughal armies was declared to the world when the Mughals failed to recapture Qandhar in spite of three determined efforts made by them In 1739, Nadir Shah not only plundered the whole of Delhi but also ordered wholesale massacre When such a thing happens without any effort on the part of the ruler to stop it, fie forfeits the right to command allegiance from the people The Mughal state was a police state and when it failed to maintain internal order and external peace, the people lost all their respect for the Government The view of Sir Wolseley Haig is that the demoralisation of the army was one of the principal factors in the disintegration of the Mughal Empire, The source of the weakness was the composition of the army which consisted chiefly of contingents' maintained by the great nobles from the revenues of assignments held by them for that purpose As the authority of the sovereign relaxed, the general

tendency' among the great nobles was naturally to hold as their own those assignments which maintained their troops The general laxity of discipline converted the army into a mob, Drill was unknown and a soldier's training which he might undergo or not as he liked, consisted in muscular exercise and in individual practice in the rise of the weapons with which he was armed He mounted guard or not as he liked There was no regular punishment for military crimes Aurangzeb himself habitually overlooked, as matters of course, acts of treason, cowardice and deliberate neglect of duty before the enemy

About the military system of the Mughals, it is contended that their weapons and methods of war had become frost-grown and outmoded They put too much reliance on artillery and armoured cavalry The artillery was local in action and ponderous in movement It was rendered stationary by huge tail of camp which looked like a city with its markets, tents, stores and baggage All kinds of people, men and women, old and young, combatants and noncombatants, besides elephants, cattle and beasts of burden, accompanied the Mughal army On the other hand, the Maratha cavalry was swift and elusive like wind They suddenly erupted on Mughal camps and launched damaging attacks on their posts Before the Mughals could get time for recovery, the Marathas "like water parted by the oar," closed and fell on them At the turn of the 18th century, musketry made rapid progress and became prominent in the methods of warfare Swift running cavalry of matchlockmen was superior to army equipped with heavy artillery and armour-clad cavalry In spite of that, the Mughals refused to change their old methods of warfare and no wonder they were defeated by the Marathas and the Afghans

The Mughals neglected the development of the navy and proved suicidal for them They never realised the

importance of a fully either gave any navy for the defence of their Empire They neither gave any importance to naval power nor took any measures to develop it The result was that the Mughals could not stand before the rising European powers which were expert in naval tactics of war It was the strength of their naval power which enabled the European powers, particularly h, to establish their commercial and political supremacy in India In course of time, they struck a deadly blow to the already tottering Mughal Empire

The Mughals suffered from intellectual bankruptcy That was partly due to the lack of an efficient system of education in the Country which alone could produce leaders of thought The result was that the Mughals failed to produce any political genius or leader who could "teach the country a new philosophy of life and to kindle aspirations after a new heaven on earth They all drifted and dozed in admiration of the wisdom of their ancestors and shook their heads at the growing degeneration of the moderns " Sir Jadunath Sarkar points out that there was no good education and no practical training of the Mughal nobility They were too much patted by eunuchs and maid servants and passed, through a sheltered life from birth to manhood Their domestic tutors were an unhappy class, powerless to do any good except by love of their pupils, browbeaten by eunuchs, disobeyed by the lads themselves and forced to cultivate the arts of the courtier or to throw up their thankless office Not much could be expected from such teachers and their wards

Another cause of Mughal downfall was the pevalence of corruption in every department of the Government The exaction of official perquisites from the public by the officials and their subordinates was universal and an admitted, practice Many officials from the highest to the lowest took bribes for doing undeserved favours Even the Emperor was not above it

Aurangzeb is stated to have asked an aspirant, to a title "Your father gave to Shah Jahan one lakh of rupees for adding Alif to his title and making him Amir Khan, How much will you Pay me for the title I am giving you?" The ministers and influential courtiers around the Emperor made fortunes Qabil Khan in 2½ years of personal attendance on Aurangzeb amassed 12 lakhs of rupees in cash, besides articles of value and a new house Offices were reserved for old families of clerks and accountants and outsiders were not allowed to come of In Such a state of affairs was detrimental to the highest interests of the state

The Mughal Government received no popular support The Mughals came to India from foreign lands and their rule came to be considered as alien With the exception of Akbar, no Mughal ruler made any effort to bring the Hindus and Muslims together and create a composite nation Akbar did some pioneering work but his work was undone by his successors Aurangzeb particularly behaved in a bigoted way and always considered himself as the ruler of the Muslims only His policies naturally offended the sentiments of the Hindus and encouraged them to revolt against him The Mughal rulers did not pay any attention to the welfare of the people They were mainly concerned with the collection of revenue and maintenance of law and order The result was that the Hindus continued to look upon the Muslim rulers as foreigners and enemies of their religion and country They were keen for an opportunity to overthrow the alien rule of the Mughals The result was that then the Mughal Empire grew weak in the 18th century, the Hindus, particularly the Marathas, Jats and Rajputs did everything possible to bring about its fall

The Mansabdari system degenerated in the time of Aurangzeb and his successors Jagirs were in short supply, Transfers were frequent and the allotment of a

new Jagır took long tıme Even when a Jagır was allotted, ıts real ıncome was generally far below ıts paper ıncome The result was that many nobles could not keep theır quota of troops That weakened the army and affected adversely the admınıstratıve efficıency The practıce of farmıng lands to the hıghest bıdder made the posıtıon of the peasants mıserable The old landed nobılıty (Zamındars) were replaced by a new type of busıness-cum-oppressor class

Another cause of Mughal downfall was the stoppage of adventurers from Persıa, Afghanıstan and Turkıstan Whıle the Mughals ın Indıa ruıned themselves through luxurıes and pleasures, there was a dearth of men who could shoulder the responsıbılıtıes of the Government It ıs the adventurers, partıcularly from Persıa, who had gıven able admınıstrators and generals to the Muslım rulers of Indıa and when that source stopped, the Mughal admınıstratıve machınery became lıke a corpse It was not able to delıver the goods

There was the general loss of nerve on the part of the Muslım communıty ın Indıa They forgot that they had a mıssıon to fulfil ın Indıa Those who counted ın the country, cared more for personal aggrandısement than for the glory of Islam ın, Indıa The ablest among them were keen to set up kıngdoms of theır own and thereby perpetuate theır names Theologıans lıke Shah Walı Ullah took refuge ın the concept of the communıty of the faıthful lookıng only to God ınstead of callıng upon the Muslıms to rally round the throne What was to be seen was not patrıotısm or bravery but cynıcısm, opportunısm and ındulgence Much could not be expected ın those cırcumstances

The ınvasıons of Indıa by Nadır Shah and Abroad Shah Abdalı gave ıı serıous blow to the already totterıng Mughal Empıre The easy vıctory of Nadır Shah and the

repeated invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali exposed to the world the military weakness of the Mughal state, The prestige of the Mughal Empire was adversely affected The people lost all faith in the capacity of the Mughal rulers to protect them against foreign invaders That encouraged them to revolt and set up their independent states

Probably one of the most important factors which contributed to the decline of the Mughal Empire was the rise of the Marathas under the Peshwas After consolidating their position in Western India, they started entertaining plans for a Hindu Empire covering Northern India also That dream could be realised only at the cost of tire Mughals, The Marathas made their gains at the cost of the Mughals and emerged as the strongest power in Northern India in the mid-18th century They not only played the role of kingmakers at the Delhi court but also acted as the defenders of the country against foreign invaders like Ahmad Shah Abdali Though the Marathas did not succeed in setting up their Empire in Northern India, they certainly gave a death blow to the Mughal Empire

The rise of the British power in India was also responsible for the downfall of the Mughal Empire Although the English East India Company started merely as a commercial adventure, it became powerful in course of time and acquired political power By the middle of the century, it was successful in ousting other European rivals in commercial and political spheres, By their victories in the battles and Buxar in 1757 and 1764 respectively, the English East India Company became the virtual master of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa Emperors had no naval power of their own to meet the English East India Company In course of time, the India Company got a perfect mastery of the whole of India formed the Mughal Empire, Sir Jadunath Sarkar writes, is conquest

of the Mughal Empire is only a part of the inevitable domination of all Africa and Asia by the European nations which is only another way of saying that the progressive races are supplanting the conservative ones, just as enterprising families are constantly replacing sleepy and self-satisfied ones in the leadership of our society "

Another important factor which hastened the downfall of the Mughal Empire was that in the eighteenth century, there was a revival of political consciousness among the martial races of the Hindus Those races were the Rajputs, the Sikhs and the Marathas They set up their independent states in their own areas on the ruins of the Mughal Empire Their attacks on the Mughal Empire rendered it hollow from within

Another cause of the downfall of the Mughal Empire was that it could no longer satisfy the minimum needs of the people The condition of the Indian peasant gradually worsened during the 17th and 18th centuries In the 18th century, his life was poor, nasty, miserable and uncertain" The constant transfer of nobles front their Jagirs led to great evil They tried to extract as much from a Jagir as possible in the short period of their tenure as Jagirdars They made heavy demands on the peasants and cruelly oppressed them, often in violation of official regulations After the death of Aurangzeb, the practice of Ijarah or farming the land revenue to the highest bidder became more and more common both on Jagir and Khalisah (Crown)) lands That led to the rise of a new class of revenue farmers and Talukdars whose extortions from the peasantry often knew no bounds There was stagnation and deterioration in agriculture and impoverishment of the peasant Peasant discontent increased and came to the surface There were instances of the peasants leaving the land in order to avoid the, payment of taxes, Peasant discontentment found an

outlet in a series of uprisings such as the Satnamis, the Jats and the Sikhs and that weakened the stability and strength of the Empire Many peasants formed roving bands of robbers and adventurers and thereby undermined law and order and efficiency of the Government

Bhimsen writes thus about the oppressive officers "There is no limit to the oppression of these men of their oppression and cruelty what may one write For no description can suffice," To quote Khafi Khan, "The cruelty, oppression and injustice of the officials, who have no thought of God, has reached such a degree that if one wishes to describe a hundredth part of it, it will still defy description

A reference may be made to some of the views of Dr Satish Chandra regarding the downfall of the Mughal Empire He points out that Aurangzeb has been criticised for having failed to unite with the Deccani states against the Marathas, or for having conquered them thereby making the Empire "so large that it collapsed under its own weight " A unity of hearts between Aurangzeb and the Deccani states was "a psychological impossibility", once the treaty of 1636 was abandoned, a development which took place during the reign of Shah Jahan himself After his accession, Aurangzeb desisted from pursuing a vigorous forward policy in the Deccan In fact, he postponed as long as possible the decision to conquer and annex the Deccani states His hand was virtually forced by the growing Maratha power, the support extended to Shivaji by Madanna and Akhanna from Golconda and fear that Bijapur might fall Linder the domination of Shivaji and the Maratha-dominated Golconda By giving shelter to the rebel Prince Akbar, Sambhaji virtually threw a challenge to Aurangzeb who quickly realised that the Marathas could not be dealt with without first subduing Bijapur and possibly Golconda

The impact of the Deccani and other wars of the Mughal Empire and of the prolonged absence of Aurangzeb from Northern India, should not be overestimated. Despite the mistakes of policy and some of the personal shortcomings of Aurangzeb, the Mughal Empire was still a powerful and vigorous military and administrative machinery. The Mughal army might fail against the elusive and the highly mobile bands of the Marathas in the mountainous region of the Deccan. Maratha forts might be difficult to capture and still more difficult to retain. But in the plains of Northern India and the vast plateau extending tip to the Karnataka, the Mughal artillery was still the master of the field. Thirty or forty years after the death of Aurangzeb when the Mughal artillery had declined considerably in strength and efficiency, the Marathas could still not face it in the field of battle. In Northern India which was the heart of the Empire and was of decisive economic and political importance in the country, the Mughal administration still retained much of its vigour. The administration at the district level proved amazingly tenacious and a good deal of it survived and found its way indirectly into the British administration. Despite the military reverses and mistakes of Aurangzeb, the Mughal dynasty still retained a powerful hold on the mind and imagination of the people.

As far as the Rajputs were concerned, the breach with Marwar was not due to any attempt on the part of Aurangzeb to undermine the Hindus by depriving them of a recognised head. That was due to a miscalculation on his part. He wanted to, divide the Marwar state between the two principal claimants, and in the process alienated both, as also the ruler of Mewar who considered Mughal interference in such matters to be a dangerous precedent. The breach with Mewar and the long drawn-out war which followed damaged the moral standing of the Mughal state. However, the fighting was not of much

consequence military after 1681 It may be doubted whether the presence of Rathor Rajputs in large numbers in the Deccan between 1681 and 1706 would have made much difference in the outcome of the conflict with the Marathas In any case, the demands of the Rajputs related to the grant of high Mansabs as before and restoration of their homelands Those demands having been accepted within halt a dozen years of the death of Aurangzeb, the Rajputs ceased to be a problem for the Mughals They played no role in the subsequent disintegration of the Mughal Empire

The religious policy of Aurangzeb should be seen in the social, economic and political contexts, Aurangzeb was orthodox in his outlook and he tried to remain within the framework of Islamic law That was developed outside, India in vastly dissimilar situations and could hardly be applied rigidly to India The failure of Aurangzeb to respect the susceptibilities of his non-Muslim subjects on many occasions, his adherence to the timeworn policy towards temples and reimposition of Jizya as laid down by the Islamic law did not help him to rally the Muslims to his side or generate a greater sense of loyalty towards a state based on Islamic Law On the other hand, it alienated the Hindus and strengthened the hands of those sections which were opposed to the Mughal Empire for political or other reasons, 'By itself, religion was not at issue Jizya was scrapped within half a dozen years of the death of Aurangzeb and restrictions on the building of new temples were eased, but they had no effect on the decline and disintegration of the Mughal Empire

In ultimate resort, the decline and downfall of the Mughal Empire was due to economic, social, political and institutional factors Akbar's measures helped to keep the forces of disintegration in check for some time, but it was not possible for him to effect fundamental changes in the structure of society By the time Aurangzeb came to the

throne, the socio-economic forces disintegration were already strong Aurangzeb lacked the foresight and statesmanship necessary to effect fundamental changes in the structure or to pursue policies which could reconcile the various competing, elements Aurangzeb was both a victim of circumstances and helped to create the circumstances of which be became a victim

India lagged behind the world in the field of science and technology and the Mughal ruling class remained blind to this development It was more concerned with matters of immediate concern than matters which would shape the future The Mughal Empire had already reached the limits of its development The feudal aristocratic nature of the state and the neglect of science and technology by the ruling class were placing limits to the economic development of the country

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Autonomous States

When the Mughal Empire began to disintegrate, many provinces virtually became independent The Subah of Bengal was the first to become autonomous and the first to pass under British rule It became autonomous under Murshid Quli Khan, a South Indian Brahman convert to Islam He was educated in Persia He served his apprenticeship in Mughal administration in the Deccan He won the confidence of Aurangzeb by honest and efficient discharge of his duties He was appointed Diwan of Bengal Subah in 1700 A D In 1701, the Diwani of Orissa was added to his charge In 1704, the Diwani of Bihar was also given to him He kept Aurangzeb satisfied by regular transmission of large amounts of money for the Deccan War On account of his disagreement with the Subahdar Azim-ush-Shan, the grandson of Aurangzeb, Murshid Quli Khan transferred Diwani office from Dacca, the provincial capital, to Maqsudabad whose name was later on changed to Murshidabad

At the time of the death of Aurangzeb, Murshid Quli Khan was Naib Nazim or Deputy Governor of Bengal and full Governor of Orissa and Diwan of Bengal and Orissa In February 1713, Farrukh-siyar conferred on him the Diwani of Bengal In September 1713, he made him also Deputy Governor of Bengal On, 6 May 1714, he received Subahdari of Orissa In September 1717, he was made full Subahdar of Bengal

Murshid Quli Khan was a strict ruler He established an efficient administration He effectively reorganised the revenue system by converting all the Jagirs of the officers in Bengal into Khalsa directly under the Crown collectors and by introducing the *Ijara* system according to which contracts were given for collection of revenue Later on those contractors became Zamindars and many of them got the title of Rajas and Maharajas Thus, a new landed aristocracy was created in Bengal whose position was confirmed and made hereditary by Lord Cornwallis Increase of revenue was also due to economy in administration and maintenance of internal peace

Although he freed himself from central control, he continued to send regularly his tribute to the Mughal Emperor He established peace by freeing Bengal of internal and external dangers Bengal was relatively free of uprisings by Zamindars The only three major uprisings during his rule were by Sitaram Ray of Bhusna Pargana, Udai Narayan and Ghulam Muhammad and then by Shujat Khan and finally by Najat Khan After defeating them, he gave their Jagirs to Ramjivan, his own favourite He was a good administrator and he improved the finances of the state He also helped the growth of trade and gave all possible help and incentives to traders, he was a man of puritan character who despised all kinds of luxury He succeeded in bringing prosperity to the province of Bengal He died in June 1727

Sir Jadunath Sarkar writes about Murshid Quli Khan, "A puritan in his private life, strictly attentive to his public duties as he understood them, gravely decorous and rigidly orthodox as befitted a favourite disciple of Aurangzeb, and a propagator of his faith as ordained in his scriptures,' Murshid Quli Khan presents one side of his character in a brilliant light

But his heart was cold and his sympathies narrow, his calculating vindictiveness, his religious bigotry, and his utter lack of warm, all-embracing benevolence, denied this conscientious civil servant the right to be ranked as a statesman or even as a truly great soul

Shuja-ud-Din

When Murshid Quli Khan died in 1727, without leaving any male issue, his son-in-law Shuja-ud-din Mohammad Khan who had been Deputy Governor of Orissa, ascended the Masnad of Bengal He appointed his friends and kinsmen to the principal offices of the Government In managing all important affairs of administration, Shuja-ud-din followed the counsel of Ali Vardi Khan, of his brother Haji Ahmad, of Alam Chand, a loyal officer and able financiar and of Jagat Seth Fateh Chand, the famous banker of Murshidabad

During the early part of his rule, Shuja-ud-Din paid due attention to the affairs of administration and sought to promote the welfare of his subjects He was charitable to his old friends, kind and bountiful towards his officers and hospitable to those who happened to come to Murshidabad He dispensed justice impartially He strictly asserted his authority over the European trading Companies in Bengal The English did not consider it advisable to risk an open rupture with him and paid film occasionally large sums of money

However, towards the end of his life, some vices in the private character of Shuja-ud-Din impaired the efficiency of his administration and supreme power fell into the hands of his advisers, Haji Ahmad, Alam Chand and Jagat Seth Fateh Chand who degenerated into a clique of self-seekers who formented intrigues and conspiracies to serve their own interests

Sarfaraz Khan (1739-40)

When Shuja-ud-Din died in March 1739, he was succeeded by his son Sarfaraz Khan He retained old officers like Haji Ahmad and Alam Chand Sarfaraz Khan was excessively addicted to debauchery and he did not posses the essential qualities needed for the ruler of a state He had to pay a very heavy price by losing his life and the Masnad of Bengal The weakness of Delhi authority, inefficiency of Sarfaraz Khan and machinations of Haji Ahmad excited Ali Vardi's ambition to seize the Masnad of Bengal for himself, With that object, he left Patna for Murshidabad Sarfaraz was killed in the battle of Gheria on 10 April 1740, Ali Vardi Khan ruled Bengal from 1740 to 1756

Ali Vardi Khan

Ali Vardi Khan rose gradually to higher and higher posts by dint of his tact and ability In 1728, Shuja-ud-Din appointed him Faujdar of the Chakla Akbarnagar He governed that area efficiently and brought peace and prosperity to the people His brother Haji Ahmad was at Murshidabad as one of the chief advisers of Shuja-ud-Din His eldest son Muhammad Raza was appointed Pay-master of Nawab's troops and superintendent of Customs at Murshidabad His second son Aga Muhammad Sa'id was appointed Faujdar of Rungpur In 1733, Ali Vardi Khan was appointed Deputy Governor of Bihar and he restored peace in that province by vigorous steps and measures of reconciliation He suppressed the disturbances with firmness The Zamindars were reduced to submission He also took strong action against the turbulent Banjaras who were devastating different parts of Bihar. In 1740 Ali Vardi seized the Masnad of Bengal by defeating and killing Sarfaraz Khan

The rule of Ali Vardi Khan was disturbed by frequent militant operations He had to subjugate Orissa by force of arm in 1741 Safdarjang, the Nawab of Avadh, entered Bihar and occupied Patna for sometime (1742) The Afghans of Bihar rote in revolt in 1745 and 1748 and they received support from Afghan adventurers from different parts of Northern India However, the Marathas were the greatest menace to Ali Vardi Khan There were as many as five Maratha invasion's in 1742, 1743, 1744, 1745 and 1748 Raghuji Bhonsle of Nagpur found in the rich province of Bengal a profitable field for plunder and extension of his political influence

In 1742, his general Bhaskar Ram invaded Bengal and his troops ravaged the Western Districts of Bengal and parts of Bihar and Orissa In 1743, Raghuji Bhonsle himself marched at the head of a large army on the plea of realising the Chauth of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa At the same time, Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao entered at the head of another Maratha army Ali Vardi Khan conciliated the Peshwa by promising payment of Chauth to Sahu and by making an immediate payment of Rs 22 lacs The allied troops of the Peshwa and Ali Vardi Khan expelled Raghuji Bhonsle The Peshwa also left Bengal Bhaskar Ram invaded again in 1744 Ali Vardi Khan got rid of him by treacherous murder and his troops fled In 1745, Raghuji Bhonsle again attacked Bengal, but he was defeated by Ali Vardi Khan and forced to retreat to Nagpur In 1748, a Maratha arm), from Nagpur, led by Janoji Bhonsle, advanced into Bengal and the operations continued till 1751 Worn out with incessant toil and weighed down with age at the age of 75, Ali Vardi Khan concluded a treaty with the Marathas in May/June 1751 The river Subarnarekha was fixed the boundary of the Bengal Subah and the

Marathas agreed never to cross it again Orissa was ceded to the Bhonsle ruler From October 1751, 12 lacs of rupees were to be paid annually to the Marathas from Bengal revenues as the Chauth of that Subah in two instalments on the condition that the Marathas would never set their foot again in the Subah of Bengal

Apart from territorial loss, the Nawab of Bengal suffered serious economic loss Agriculture, industry, trade and commerce were dislocated There was social dislocation as a large number of people migrated from the ravaged Western Districts of Bengal to the Northern and Eastern Districts The English merchants of Calcutta took measures for the defence of the town against apprehended Maratha raids and provided shelter for many people That earned for them the goodwill and confidence of the Indians Ali Vardi was generally conciliatory He was aware of their growing strength and the political developments connected with the Anglo-French conflict in the Deccan alarmed him That fear came out to be true in the time of his successor

Ali Vardi Khan governed Bengal ably and with prudence and foresight In his private life, he was free from the prevailing vices of the ruling and aristocratic classes of those days He was a tactful and strong Governor who tried to infuse spirit and vigour into every branch of his administration

Siraj-ud-Daulah

Ali Vardi Khan died on 10 April 1750 and he was succeeded by his grandson and heir-designate Siraj-ud-Daulah He had enemies among his near relations who coveted the Bengal Masnad or influence through it They were his cousin Shaukat Jung and his mother's eldest sister Ghasiti Begum who had amassed

immense wealth Siraj-ud-Daulah's most for midable enemy was Mir Jafar, the Commander-in-Chief of the army

Soon after his accession, Siraj-ud-Daulah seized the huge wealth of Ghasiti Begum He removed Mir Jafar from the post of the commander of the army and appointed in his place Mir Madan, Mohan Lal was made Peshkar of the Diwan-i-Khanah Siraj-ud-Daulah defeated and killed Shaukat Jung in October 1756

Siraj-ud-Daulah had three specific grievances against the English East India Company The Company had built strong fortifications and dug a large ditch in the king's dominion contrary to the laws of the country The second grievance was that the English had abused the privilege of their Dastaks fly granting them to such men, is were in no way entitled to them and the Nawab lost the revenue The third complaint was that they had given protection in Calcutta to some of the king's subjects and instead of giving them up on demand, they allowed such persons to shelter themselves within the their bounds from the hands of justice The charges were not baseless but the English in Calcutta insulted the messenger of Siraj-ud-Daulah On 4 June 1756, the English factory at Kasim Bazar was stormed by the soldiers of the Nawab The Nawab captured Calcutta on 20 June 1756 The story of "Blackhole" has been proved to be untrue The Madras Council sent reinforcement of troops under Admiral Watson and Colonel Clive to recover Calcutta by the first week of February 1757 Adverse circumstances forced Siraj-ud-Daulah to conclude a treaty with the English on 9 February 1757 by which the trade rights and factories of the English East India Company were restored to them and restitution and compensation money were promised by the Nawab to the Company, its servants and tenants The English

were granted permission to fortify Calcutta and coin Sicca, rupees In return for these concessions, the English Company promised to help Siraj-ud-Daulah against the Afghans

However, peace between, Siraj-ud-Daulah and the English did not last long The Nawab was suspicious of the designs of the English Company and the English Company was also convinced that the Nawab would try to destroy them The result was that the English decided to overthrow the Nawab A conspiracy was hatched and it was decided to put Mir Jafar on the Masnad of Bengal In pursuance of that conspiracy, the battle of Plassey was fought on 23 June 1757 in which the English were victorious Siraj-ud-Daulah ran away from the battle-field but he was captured and put to death Mir Jafar was made the Nawab of Bengal

Mir Jafar

Mir Jafar ruled from 1757 to 1760 He was merely a figurehead and the real power was in the hands of Clive Ultimately, in 1760 he was removed by the English Company and Mir Qasim was made the Nawab in 1760 He ruled from 1760 to 1763 He was also removed in 1763 and replaced by Mir Jafar Mir Jafar remained the Nawab of Bengal for the second time from July 1763 to February 1765 When Mir Jafar died in 1765, his second son Najam-ud-Daulah was put on the throne but all power passed into the hands of the English Company In 1765, Clive set up hat is known as Dual Government of Bengal which lasted upto 1772 when the administration of Bengal was taken over directly by the English Cast India Company

Avadh. Saadat Ali Khan

Avadh became independent under Saadat Ali Khan who was the leader of the Irani faction in the court of

Muhammad Shah After being in the service of Sarbuland Khan (1710-12), Saadat Ali Khan joined the service of Farrukh-siyar He became Faujdar of Hindaun and Bayana and was made a noble on 9 October 1720 He was appointed Governor first of Agra (1720-22) and then of Avadh He extended the jurisdiction of Avadh over Banaras, Ghazipur, Jaunpur and Chunar He gradually acquired power and fame He was summoned to Delhi at the time of invasion of Nadir Shah in 1739 but he committed suicide in March 17 19 as he could not fulfil the promise, made by film to Nadir Shah During his long tenure, the people began to look upon him as their real master and thus the foundations of the Shia dynasty in Avadh wet securely laid

Safdarjang

The next Governor of Avadh was Safdarjang (1739-54) He was the nephew and son-in-law of Saadat Ali Khan In 1742, Emperor Muhammad Shah asked Safdarjang to protect Bihar Safdarjang went to Bihar and entered Patna city in December 1742 However, the Mughal Emperor asked him to come back and he did so in February 1743

When Ahmed Shah became the Emperor in 1748, he appointed Safdarjang as his Wazir The position of Safdarjang was "one of unusual difficulty He was considered as an interloper by the old nobility He had to meet opposition from Nizam-ul-Mulk's sort and grandson of Javid Khan and the sons of the late Wazir Qamar-ud-Din He had contest, with the Afghans (1748-52) He was defeated at Ramchatauni in 1750 and he made peace with the Rohillas and Bangashes under the orders of the Mughal Emperor in April 1752 In 1753, Safdarjang got Javid Khan murdered He tried to grasp everything and became extremely

domineering A conspiracy was hatched against Safdarjang There was a civil war between the Emperor and Safdarjang from to November 1753 He left for Avadh in November and died in 1754 He gave lasting peace to Avadh and Allahabad

Shuja-ud-Daulah (1754-1775)

After the death of Safdarjang in October 1754, his son Shuja-ud-Daulah became the Subedar of Avadh and he occupied that position till 1775 His personal character was not at all commendable He was occupied with nothing but pleasure, hunting and the most violent exercises, He did not possess the genius of a soldier He was wanting in valour and courage, He specialised in treachery He was rapacious in acquiring and Preserving wealth

The relations of Shuja-ud-Daulah with Imad-ul-Mulk, the imperial Wazir, were extremely bitter and that resulted in plots and counter-plots, Prince Ali Gauhar became a friend of Shuja-ud-Daulah who encouraged the Prince to invade Bihar, During the Maratha-Afghan contests (1759-61), Shuja-ud-Daulah fought as an ally of Ahmad Shah Abdali In February 1762, Shah Alam If appointed Shuja-ud-Daulah as the Wazir

When Mir Qasim was driven out from Bengal in 1763, he took refugee with Shuja-ud-Daulah who agreed to help him to recover his lost province Mir Qasim helped Shuja-ud-Daulah in subduing the rebels of Bundelkhand and promised to pay the Mughal Emperor and Shuja-ud-Daulah ten and seventeen lacs of rupees respectively, In October 1764 was fought the battle of Buxar in which Shuja-ud-Daulah and Mir Qasim were defeated After running from one place to another, Shuja-ud-Daulah was finally defeated in the battle of Kora in May 1765 Colonel Fletcher overran

the territory of Shuja-ud-Daulah and occupied Banaras, Buxar and Allahabad, Avadh fell completely under British control Shah Alam threw himself under the protection of the English who gave him residence in the Allahabad fort Lord Clive who had returned to Bengal as Governor of the English East India Company in May 1765 met Shuja-ud-Daulah at Banaras and the Mughal Emperor at Allahabad By the treaty of Allahabad dated 16 August 1765, all the territories of Shuja-ud-Daulah were restored to him with the exception of Kora and Allahabad which were given to the Mughal Emperor, Chunar and the Zamindari of Banaras Shuja-ud-Daulah agreed to pay Rs 50 lacs to the English East India Company as compensation for the expenses of the recent war, He entered into a defensive treaty with the British for mutual support in the defence of his territories and agreed to defray the cost of the troops maintained for that purpose This treaty made Shuja-ul-Daulah completely dependent on the British

In July 1766, Clive called a congress at Chapra in Bihar which was attended by Shuja-ud-Daulah and others A treaty was signed for mutual defence and security from the attacks of the Marathas Under pressure from Clive, Shuja-ud-Daulah was appointed the Wazir by the Mughal Emperor In order to check the anti-English designs of Shuja-ud-Daulah, the English concluded a treaty with him on 29 November 1768 which ' checked the strength and progress of the Wazir's army and freed the English from apprehension from their ally" This treaty was resented by Shuja-ud-Daulah and hence it was cancelled in September 1773

The relations of Shuja-ud-Daulah with the Mughal Emperor were not cordial between 1765-68 as he wanted to have complete control over the imperial court as de facto Wazir by eliminating the influence of

Munir-ud-Daulah in whom the Emperor had confidence, Though the efforts of the British, a reconciliation was arranged between the Emperor and Shuja-ud-Daulah and their relations were cordial from 1769 to 1771, When the Mughal Emperor returned to Delhi with Maratha help in 1771, he was deprived of Kora and Allahabad which were transferred to Shuja-ud-Daulah in lieu of Rs 50 lacs and an annual subsidy for the maintenance of a garrison of the troops of the English Company for the protection of Nawab Shuja-ud-Daulah This arrangement was ratified by the treaty of Banaras on 7 September 1773 Warren Hastings, promised to help Shuja-ud-Daulah to conquer Rohilkhand, Shuja-ud-Daulah agreed to receive an English gentleman having the confidence of Warren Hastings who was to act as Political Resident in Avadh

The Nawab of Avadh wanted to occupy Rohilkhand To prevent the attacks, of the Marathas into Rohilkhand, a treaty was concluded between Shuja-ud-Daulah and the Rohillas The Rohillas promised to pay Rs 40 lacs to Shuja-ud-Daulah if he expelled the Marathas from their territory, When the Marathas invaded Rohilkhand in 1773, they were defeated by the combined forces of the English Company and Avadh, Shuja-ud-Daulah demanded from Hafiz Rahmat Khan, leader of the Rohillas, ,he payment of the sum of Rs 40 Lacs, Rahmat Khan evaded payment Shuja-ud-Daulah demanded help from the English Company A British army was sent under Colonel Champion in February 1774 The combined forces of Shuja-ud-Daulah and the English Company marched into Rohilkhand in April 1774 Hafiz Rahmat Khan was killed About 20,000 Rohillas were expelled beyond the Ganges and their province became a part of the kingdom of Avadh A part of it was given to

Rampur Shuja-ud-Daulah died on 26 January 1775 and he was succeeded by his eldest son Asaf-ud-Daulah (1775-97)

Asaf-ud-Daulah (1775-97)

The accession of Asaf-ud-Daulah marked the beginning of the degradation and exploitation of Avadh by the English Company This was due to the fact that Asaf-ud-Daulah was weak and dependent on the British Warren Hastings forced the Nawab of Avadh to accept another brigade and pay for it The British got the right of nominating the ministers of Asaf-ud-Daulah Private British merchants entered Avadh and started exploiting the people The result was that there was a rapid decline in the prosperity of Avadh and steady deterioration in its administration The treasury was exhausted on account of the extravagance of the Nawab The Nawab had also to pay for the subsidiary force Asaf-ud-Daulah pleaded and protested against the heavy expenses of the subsidiary force but without any result British control over Avadh continued to grow and there was mare and more exploitation of Avadh Asaf-ud-Daulah died in 1797 and his son Wazir Ali was recognised by Sir John Shore but he was deposed and Saadat Ali was put on the throne

Lord Wellesley put pressure on Saadat Ali to sign the annexation of Avadh by the British but the Nawab refused, However, by the treaty of 1801, the British ' took away from Avadh Rohilkhand and the Eastern, Districts to pay the expenses of the subsidiary force This was an act of highhandedness The British attitude towards Avadh was one of exploitation When Saadat Ali made any saving, it was, taken away it, the form of loans which were never returned However, in lieu of them, the Nawab Wazir of Avadh got the title of king of Avadh During the regime of Lord William

Bentinck, there was a danger to the very existence of the state of Avadh on account of its mis-government

Nasir-ud-Din died in 1837 and he was succeeded by Muhammad Ali who was forced to pay for another British brigade In 1842, Muhammad Ali was succeeded by Amjad Ali who was succeeded by Wajid Ali Shah In 1856, Avadh was annexed to the English Company and Wajid Ali Shah was given a pension and sent to Calcutta

Hyderabad

Hyderabad was formed by the six Deccan Subahs of the Mughal Empire The Deccan was a newly conquered region in which Mughal authority could not be consolidated on account of the struggle with the Marathas Zulfiqar Khan, the most powerful and reputed general of Aurangzeb, formed plans to seize the Deccan Subahs after the death of Aurangzeb In order to achieve his aim, he entered into a secret understanding with the Marathas He was a Shia and his aim was to build up a Shia kingdom on the ruins of Bijapur and Golcunda Another powerful Mansabdar who aspired to set up an independent state in the Deccan was Chin Qilich Khan who later became Nizam-ul-Mulk Asaf Jah Zulfiqar Khan and Chin Qilich Khan belonged to two rival factions in the Mughal court, Irani and Turani For some years after the death of Aurangzeb Zulfiqar Khan and his father Asad Khan who had held the office of Wazir under Aurangzeb, continued to exercise great influence in the Mughal court In 1708, Zulfiqar Khan managed to secure the viceroyalty of the Deccan from Bahadur Shah I and held that post till 1713 when he was murdered by Farrukh-siyar

At the time of the death of Aurangzeb, Chin Qilich Khan was at Bijapur and be observed neutrality

during the war of succession among the sons of Aurangzeb Bahadur Shah removed Chin Qilich Khan from the Deccan and made him the Governor of Avadh and Faujdar of Gorakhpur on 9 December 1707 For some time, he retired from public service but joined it again towards the close of the reign of Bahadur Shah, In 1713, Farrukh-siyar appointed Nizam-ul-Mulk the Governor of , the six Subahs by investing him with the titles of Khan Khana and Nizam-ul-Mulk Bahadur Fatehjang as a reward for his services having espoused his cause Nizam-ul-Mulk was extremely ambitious and he wanted to rule over the Deccan independently of Delhi

Nizam-ul-Mulk was an astute diplomat He tried to check the growing power of the Marathas by stopping the payment of Chauth and instigating the self-seeking and ambitious Maratha leaders against Sahu The intrigues at the Delhi court led to Nizam-ul-Mulk's recall from the Deccan by the end of 1715 and in his place Hussian Ali was appointed Governor of the Deccan Nizam-ul-Mulk was transferred to Muradabad and subsequently it was decided to move him to Bihar, Before he could assume charge of the new office, the regime of Farrukh-siyar came to an end and Nizam-ul-Mulk was transferred to Malwa He started for Ujjain after receiving the pledge that be would not be transferred again

While in Malwa, Nizam-ul-Mulk was able to lay the foundation of his future greatness His activities aroused the jealousy of the Sayyid Brothers and fie was recalled, Nizam-ul-Mulk decided to act in self-defence by the use of arms He occupied Asirgarh in May 1720 and three days later Burhanpur fell The Sayyid Brothers ordered Sayyid Dilawar Ali Khan and Alam Ali Khan to oppose the march of Nizam-ul-Mulk, Dilawar Ali Khan was defeated in June 1720 Alam Ali

Khan was defeated and killed in the battle While Husain Ali was on the way to the Deccan, he was stabbed to death on 8 October 1720 Sayyid Abdullah was also defeated and killed

After the fall of the Sayyid Brothers, Nizam-ul-Mulk made himself the master of the six Subahs of the Deccan and began his operations against the Marathas In February 1722, he was appointed Wazir of the Mughal Empire and he occupied that office upto 1724 He tried to put things in order but he was unsuccessful on account of opposition from the Emperor and his flatterers His strict discipline provoked dislike and Jealousy He was extremely unhappy As Wazir, he added Malwa and Gujarat to the Subedari of the Deccan, When he found that he was not liked in the court, he marched away to the Deccan without the permission of the Emperor That was not liked by the Emperor who appointed Mubariz Khan as the Viceroy of the Deccan and directed him to send the Nizam to the court, dead or alive Mubariz Khan was defeated and killed by the Nizam who sent his head to the Emperor Nizam-ul-Mulk defeated the son of Mubariz Khan and took possession of Hyderabad by the beginning of 1725 Irvine writes, "From this period may be dated Nizam-ul-Mulk's virtual independence and the foundation of the present Hyderabad state " He bestowed offices in the Deccan He made promotions in rank and conferred titles He issued assignments an land revenue at his own will and pleasure The only attributes of sovereignty from which he refrained were the use of scarlet or imperial umbrella, the recitation of the Friday prayer in his own name I and the issue of coins stamped with his own superscription

Nizam-ul-Mulk correctly realised that the activities of Peshwa Baji Rao I were opposed to his

own policy of establishing an independent kingdom in the Deccan and hence he decided to oppose him There were many Maratha chiefs who were not satisfied with the Peshwa and they joined the Nizam against him For five years, Peshwa Baji Rao I had to fight against them from 1727 to 1732 The Nizam was defeated at Palkhed in 1728 and his ally Senapati Trimbak Rao Dabhade was killed in 1731 Nizam-ul-Mulk decided to come to terms with the Peshwa who was also anxious to settle with the Nizam so that he could carry on his campaigns in the North A compromise was arrived at in December 1732 by which the Nizam was to be free to satisfy his ambition in the South and the Peshwa in the North

After the sudden dash of Peshwa Baji Rao on Delhi, the Mughal Emperor summoned the Nizam from the Deccan and he reached Delhi in July 1737 The Mughal Emperor conferred the title of Asaf Jah on the Nizam The Nizam marched towards Malwa but he was defeated by Peshwa Baji Rao near Bhopal and was compelled to conclude a humiliating peace in January 1738 The Nizam promised to grant to Baji Rao the Subedari of Malwa and rights over the territory between the Narmada and the Chambal

When Nadir Shah attacked India, the Mughal Emperor called Nizam-ul-Mulk to Delhi to negotiate the terms of agreement with the invader, The agreement was actually made by the Nizam but the same was upset by Saadat Ali Khan

Nizam-ul-Mulk ruled the Deccan independently till his death in 1748 He continued to profess his allegiance to the Mughal Emperor He rejected the offer of Nadir Shah to make him the ruler of Delhi Nizam-ul-Mulk was not only the foremost general of his time in India and a careful and honest

administrator but also a master of statecraft and diplomacy He was universally regarded as the sole representative of the spacious times of Aurangzeb The rich provinces under his administration prospered during his long reign The refractory chiefs, ambitious officers and robber leaders were suppressed The revenue assessment was moderate His taxation policy promoted trade He followed a policy of religious toleration He appointed Puran Chand as his Diwan

After the death of Nizam-ul-Mulk, there was a war of succession which became linked with the Anglo-French conflict in the Deccan, Political stability was restored in 762 by the accession of Nizam Ali who had a long reign of more than four decades In the time of Lord Wellesley, the Nizam entered into a subsidiary alliance with the English East India Company and virtually became their subordinate ally

Rohilkhand

In the first half of the eighteenth century, there was a fresh wave of Afghan immigration into Northern India Afghan adventurers found military employment in many places Many of them settled in a solid bloc between Delhi and Agra on the West and Avadh and Allahabad on the East and became a serious menace to the Mughal Empire by the middle of the eighteenth century Their Indian settlement, formerly known as Katchar, now came to be known as Rohilkhand because it was populated mainly by the Rohillas The Rohillas first came into prominence under Daud, an Afghan soldier of fortune, who came from Qandhar He and his party of Afghan adventurers hired themselves out first to the land-owners and then to the imperial Governor of that place Daud "laid the foundations of an estate " On his death in 1721, his adopted son Ali Muhammad Khan obtained command of his retainers

and sought to implement his ambitious plans Ali Muhammad Khan was able to raise an army of his own

In 1727, he defeated a Khawajasara of the Mughal Emperor and seized all his property, That raised his prestige and he took up the title of Nawab He started living in royal style and held his court like an independent prince He was able to get the right of collecting taxes from the region under his authority In 1737, he got the title of Nawab from the Emperor The adverse effects of the invasion of Nadir Shah on the Mughal Empire emboldened Ali Muhammad Khan to seize territories right and left He extended his influence to Muradabad and occupied most of the region His authority extended to the whole of Bareilly and Muradabad and portions of Hardoi and Badaun He was appointed the Governor of Katehar by the Emperor In due course, he was, able to occupy Pilibhit, Bijnor, and Kumaon

In 1745, the Emperor Muhammad Shah was persuaded by Safdar Jang to lead an expedition against Ali Muhammad Khan After three months campaigning, it "achieved only a superficial and ephemeral victory and that too more by persuasion than by compulsion" Apprehending trouble during the ensuing rainy season, the Mughal Emperor was persuaded to make peace with Ali Muhammad Khan who agreed to dismantle the fortifications of Bangarh and to surrender the fiefs reserved by him to the Mughal authorities Soon he received a Mansab of 4000 and was sent to Sirhind as the Mughal Faujdar of that place

On hearing of the capture of Lahore by Ahmad Shah Abdali and his intention to march towards Delhi, Ali Muhammad Khan left his post at Sirhind in the

moddle of February 1748 and returned to Rohılkhand with his full contingent of Afghans and re-established his authority by March/April 1748, In this way, the Mughal rule was ended in Rohilkhand Ali Muhammad Khan died on 15 September 1748 and his possessions were divided into three parts to one of which Hafiz Rahmat Khan succeeded as the leader Shaikh Qutb-ud-Din tried to get back the Faujdari of Rohilkhand which his grandfather had once enjoyed but he was defeated in the battle at Dhampur near Muradabad

Wazir Safdar Jang formed a new plan to suppress the Rohillas whom he considered as serpents infesting his road to Delhi Safdar Jang instigated Qaim Khan, the Bangash chief, to drive out the Afghans by appointing him tire Faujdar of Rohilkhand After some success at the beginning, Kaim Khan's army met with disaster and lie himself was shot dead All the possessions of the Bangash chief on the left, or Eastern bank of the Ganges were annexed, by Hafiz Rahmat However, Hafiz Rahmat dissuaded his troops from crossing the river and invading the territories of Qaim Khans territories on the West bank, The reason given was that the Afghans could not destroy one another, Within a few months, Safdar Jang became unpopular with the Bangash Afghans and was defeated at the battle of Ram Chataunı on 13 September 1750, He was also disgraced at the Delhi court However, he was able to re-establish his position and form an alliance with the Marathas and Jats for invading Rohilkhand In April 1751, the allies won a resounding victory over the Rohillas When the Emperor heard of the invasion of the Punjab by Ahmad Shah Abdali in early 1752, the Emperor asked the Wazir to make peace with the Afghans of Rohilkhand Farrukhabad and some other Mahals worth Rs 16 or 22 lacs a year were left to Ahmad and other sons of Muhammad Khan Bangash

while the sons of Ali Muhammad Khan were confirmed in the possession of Mirabad and some other Mahals which they had seized after the death of Qaim Khan, but they were subjected to the payment of revenue for them Safdar Jang kept a few of the places for himself The Rohillas and the Bangashes emerged with very little permanent loss By rendering good services to Ahmad Shah Abdali in the third battle of Panipat in January 1761, the Rohillas and the Bangashes made some gains After that, Rohillas became independent For some time, they were able to capture Delhi also but they had to vacate it an account of opposition from the Marathas and Nawab of Avadh

In the time of Warren Hastings, British troops were sent to Rohilkhand to help the Nawab Wazir of Avadh to conquer Rohilkhand Hafiz Rahmat Khan was killed while fighting bravely About 20,000 Rohillas were expelled beyond the Ganges Their province was annexed to Avadh Only a fragment of it, together with Rampur, was left in the possession of Faizullah Khan, son of Ali Muhammad Khan

Farrukhabad

Muhammad Khan Bangash, an Afghan adventurer, established his control over the territory around Farrukhabad, between Aligarh and Kanpur, during the reigns of Farrukh-siyar and Muhammad Shah Muhammad Khan raised a band of Afghans whom he employed in plundering raids and fighting the battle of local Jagirdars on payment In 1713, he was appointed a courtier by Farrukh-siyar In 1714, he founded the town of Farrukhabad He was able to acquire a large Jagir whose area was about 75,000 square miles, His influence became so great that he was appointed the Governor of Allahabad and Malwa, He was so faithful to the Emperor that he never thought of independence

When he died in 1743, he was succeeded by his son Qayam Khan

Bundelkhand

Bundelkhand was an absolutely wild tract and difficult of access in the rainy season, Its dense forests, rapid streams and steep hills shielded it from all outside invaders, The Bundelas gathered strength, extended their territories and were forged into a formidable force under Madhukar Shah who was ruling at Orchlia He was forced into submission in 1578 after repeated Mughal expeditions After the death of Madhukar Shah in 1592, his son Bir Singh became the head of Bundelkhand In 1602, at the instigation of Prince Salim, Bir Singh Bundela murdered Abul Fazl During the reign of Akbar, Bir Singh Bundela was pursued by Mughal forces, but when Jahangir became Emperor, Bir Singh was given a Mansab of 3000 He was made the ruler of Orchha state The Bundela power reached it Pith under Bir Singh He grew in wealth and power, He brought undei his rule vast neighbouring fertile tracts, He was a great builder A built a temple in Mathura at a cost of Rs 33 lacs, He was a patron on Hindi poet Keshav Bir Singh died in 1627 and he was succeeded by Jujhar Singh In the reign of Shah Jahan, Jujhar Singh was forced into submission He died in 1635 He was succeeded by Champat Rai Bundela He was a brave fighter and a courageous leader of men He fought for Aurangzeb in the battle of Samugarh, but later on left him Aurangzeb sent a Mughal force to suppress him He was relentlessly, pursued and he ultimately committed suicide in October 1661

Champat Rai was succeeded by Chhatra Sal He was enlisted in the Mughal army at the request of Mirza Raja Jai Singh and he accompanied him to the

Deccan He fought well in the Purandhar campaign of 1665 and the invasion of Deogarh in 1667 However, Chhatra Sal did not feel happy while serving the Mughals He wanted to live a life of adventure and independence like Shivaji He visited Shivaji and sought to enter his service in 1670

However, Shivaji advised him to go back to his own country and promote local risings against Aurangzeb The efforts of Chhatra Sal to win over the Bundela leaders to fight against The Mughal Empire did not succeed However, Aurangzeb launched upon a policy of temple destruction which aroused universal indignation among the Hindus The Hindus of Bundelkhand and Malwa made preparations to defend their places of worship

When Chhatra Sal appeared in their midst to oppose the Mughal army, he was hailed as tile champion of Hindu faith and Bundela liberty He was elected their leader by the rebels Many petty chiefs joined Chhatra Sal As Aurangzeb became more and more entangled in the Deccan, Chhatra Sal took full advantage of the opportunity He captured Kalinjar and Dhamuni and even looted Bhilsa He extended his raids upto 'Malwa, In 16911 Chhatra Sal was defeated by Sher Afghan A year later, Sher Afghan was killed, There was none to oppose Chhatra Sal In 1705, Chhatra Sal was made a Mansabdar of 4000 and he met Aurangzeb in the Deccan He returned to Bundelkhand after the death of Aurangzeb For 14 years, Chhatra Sal fully cooperated with the Mughal Empire In May 1708, the sons of Chhatra Sal met Bahadur Shah and they were given Mansabs, In April 1710, Chhatra Sal presented himself before the Emperor and joined the Mughal army which was matching against Banda, the Sikh leader He participated in the assault on the Sikh fortress of

Lohgarh He retained imperial favour during the reign of Farrukh-siyar on 21, January 1714, he got the rank of 6000 Zat In May 1718, three of his sons and some grandsons attended the Imperial Court and presents In 1720, the Bundelas revolted They sacked Kalpi killed the local Amil In a fierce fight on 25 May 1721 between Chhatra Sal and his men with those of Dilir Khan 500 men of Chhatra Sal were killed After the death of Dilir Khan, Chhatra Sal had to be suppressed In 1723 Muhammad Khan was asked to lead an expedition into Bundelkhand to check the growing power of Chhatra Sal In May 1727, Muhammad Khan encountered the entrenched position of the Bundelas at Ijoli in Pargana Mahoba Chhatra Sal and his party sought refugee in the fort of Salhat He was pursued by the enemy Active hostilities were resumed in April 1728

In December 1728, the fortress of Jaitpur fell in the hands of the Mohammadans The Bundelas renewed their activities in February 1729 Muhammad Khan met with difficulties and reverses Chhatra Sal asked the Peshwa to come to his help Peshwa Baji Rao responded and he attacked Muhammad Khan in March 1729 Muhammad Khan and his troops suffered terribly

The Marathas defeated Qaim Khan who had come to help Muhammad Khan Muhammad Khan appealed to the Mughal Emperor and the great nobles for help but without any Success On account of the outbreak of epidemic in the Maratha camp, the Marathas raised the siege and returned to the Deccan Chhatra Sal came to terms with Muhammad Khan in August 1729, Muhammad Khan signed a written agreement that he would not attack Bundelkhand again, Chhatra Sal died in December 1731 at the age of 82 His sons divided the state among themselves

The Jats

The Jats lived in the region around Delhi, Agra and Mathura They were a hardy tribe, preeminently agricultural and well-known for their valour, indefatigable energy, martial spirit and untiring perseverance The tribal feeling was very strong among them They professed different religions viz , Hinduism, Sikhism and Islam, but they clung tenaciously their tribal name as a proud heritage The Mughal Government been following a policy which left behind it a legacy of undying hatred" Murshid Quli Khan Turkman, Faujdar of Mathura, offended the jars by abduction of women from villages and religious gatherings at 'Govardhan on the birthday of Lord Krishna Abdun Nabi Khan, another Faujdar of Mathura (1660-69), built a Jama Masjid in the heart of the city of Mathura on the ruins of a Hindu temple He forcibly removed the carved stone railing presented by Dara Shikoh to Keshab Rai's temple All these goaded the Jats to break out into open revolt In 1669, the Jat peasants revolted under their leader Gokla, the Zamindar of Tilpat There was bitter fighting and ultimately Gokla was killed at Agra and the members of his family were converted to Islam However, the spirit which he had infused into his men did not die with him and after several years, other capable leaders stepped into his place They were Raja Ram and Ram Chehra They gave military training to the Jat peasants, equipped them with fire-arms and gave them the semblance of an organised and regular army They built small forts in the midst of deep forests and erected mud walls around them for defence against artillery Those forts served as refugees in times of necessity, bases for military operations and places for the storage of their booty The road from Delhi to Agra and Dholpur anti thence via Malwa to the Deccan lay through the Jat country and tin Jars carried on

plundering raids on that highway and tile suburbs of Agra The long absence of Aurangzeb from Northern India and his stay in the Deccan encouraged the jars to plunder the rich, convoys passing through their country, The Governor of Agra was not able to check the lawless activities of Raja Ram who closed the roads to traffic and sacked many villages, Raja Ram became more and more daring and attacked even influential persons, Aurangzeb sent his grandson Bidar Bakht against Raja Ram and two important, strongholds of the Jats were taken by the Mughal troops

Churaman

Another leader of the jars was Churaman (1695-1721) who was the younger brother of, Raja Ram Churaman started his career as a free-booter Within a short time, he brought under his leadership 1000 infantry and 500 horsemen To begin with, he plundered way-farers and merchant caravans, but later on he sacked Parganas also He built a palace in the midst of a thick forest about 48 Kos from Agra and dug a deep moat which was gradually made into a mud fort, subsequently known as Bharatpur He had great capacity for organisation He was a practical politician who made "clever use of opportunities" whenever possible Many of his activities and the full development of his power were seen after the death of Aurangzeb He took full advantage of the war of succession among the sons of Aurangzeb to strengthen his position, After the victory of Bahadur Shah, he professed allegiance to him and received a Mansab of 1500 Zat, 500 Sawar He joined the Mughal forces at Ajmer and fought against the Sikhs at Sadhaura and Lohgarh (1710)

There was another way of succession after the death of Bahadur Shah in 1712. Jahandar Shah came

out successful but he was totally unfit to rule Churaman went back to his country and devoted his energy to increase his power When Farrukh-siyar approached Agra to contest the throne, Churaman did not render any help to Jahandar Shah and looted the baggage of both parties The Mughal Subahdar of Agra tried to subdue Churaman, but he failed The next Subahdar followed a policy of conciliation and was able to bring Churaman to the Imperial Court He was cordially" received and placed incharge of the royal highway from Barapula near Delhi to the crossing on the Chambal Churaman constructed a fortress at Thun in the midst of a thick and thorny forest

The Mughal Emperor did not approve of the attitude of Churaman and deputed Sawai Jai Singh of Jaipur to punish Churaman Sawai Jai Singh besieged the fort of Thun in November 1716 Churaman made proposals of peace to Sayyid Abdullah and offered to, pay a tribute of 30 lacs of rupees to the Imperial Government and a present of 20 lacs of rupees to Sayyid Abdulla The proposal was accepted and Sawai Jai Singh raised the siege Churaman visited Delhi in April 1718 When differences arose between Sayyid Abdullah and the Emperor Muhammad Shah, Churaman took the side of Sayyid Abdullah Churaman also entered into an alliance with Ajit Singh of Jodhpurs against the interests of the Imperial Government He also helped the Bundelas against the Mughal Governor of Allahabad, The Emperor Muhammad Shah ordered the Governor of Agra to take action against Churaman, Churaman made a mistake in having quarrels with his relations He committed suicide

Badan Singh

Churaman was succeeded by Badan Singh (1722-56)

who was his nephew He was recognised as the chief of the Jats by Jai Singh and the same was confirmed by the Imperial Court It was a very critical time for the Jats and Badan Singh had to start everything afresh By his conduct, he won over the support of Jai Singh who bestowed on him the title of Brajaraj, but Badan Singh, abstained from assuming the title of Raja Throughout his life, he called himself a Thakur or baron and represented himself in public as a vassal of the ruler of Jaipur, He was a rapable leader with indefatigable energy He united the scatered units of Jats All lands and wealth held by Jat village headmen were brought under his control He strengthened his position by the application of force where necessary and by matrimonial alliances with some influential families of Mathura He organised a strong army consisting of infantry and cavalry He constructed four strong forts including Bharatpur and Dig and provided them with ample provisions and sufficient artillery He laid the foundations of a new ruling house of Bharatpur with an enlarged territory In 1752, he was created a Raja by the Mughal Emperor, Ahmad Shah He was a patron of architecture He constructed a temple at Brindaban, fine palaces in the fort of Dig and palaces at Kamar and Sahar He was succeeded by his adopted son, Suraj Mal

During the later half of the reign of his father, Suraj Mal had acted as Regent on account of his inactivity and growing blindness During that period, he earned a name for himself as an able warrior, efficient leader and able statesman As a ruler, he extended his authority over a large area which extended from the Ganges in the East to Chainbal in the South, the province of Agra in the West and the province of Delhi in the North His state included, among others, the Districts of Agra, Mathura, Meerut

and Aligarh For his political sagacity, steady intellect and clear vision, he is remembered as the Jat Ulysses" A contemporary historian described Suraj Mal in these words "Though he wore the dress of a farmer and could speak only his Brij dialect, he was the Plato of the Jar tribe In prudence and skill, and ability to manage the revenue and civil affairs, he had no equal among the grandees of Hindustan except Asaf Jah Bahadur " Sayyid Ghulam Husain writes that Suraj Mal was the eye and shining taper of the fat tribe—a prince who rendered himself famous by his good manners and civil department as well as by his conquests and his superior knowledge in the arts of Government " He gave his state peace and prosperity He was loved land respected by his subjects He was admired and feared by foreigners At the time of his death, his army consisted of 15,000 cavalry and 25,000 infantry besides fort garrisons He left behind a reserve fund of 10 crores, The view of Thornton is that the palaces constructed by him are surpassed in India for elegance of design and perfection of workmanship only by the Tajmahal of Agra"

By his tactful and efficient guidance of affairs of the state, Suraj Mal not only proved his political foresight and sagacity, but remained the strongest potentate in India with absolutely unimpaired forces and art overflowing treasury, while every other chief had been more or less ruined He wrested considerable portions of the Doab from the Marathas, recovered his lost places in Aligarh and Bulandshahr Districts from the possession of Ahmad Shah Abdali and also conquered some places of the Agra District and Haryana

Jawahir Singh (1764-68)

Suraj Mal was succeeded by his son Jawahir Singh He

made preparations against Najib-ud-Daulah in order to take revenge of the death of his father He marched to Delhi and laid siege to it However, he could not reap the desired benefit due to the faithlessness of Malhar Rao and treacherous conduct of a section of the Jat officers, Jawahir Singh took action against those influential and powerful fat leaders whom he considered to be refractory He was involved in a quarrel with the Marathas who had supported his brother Nahar Singh in his claim to the throne of his father He defeated his enemies in March 1766 and captured Dholpur He also raided the Maratha possessions in Northern Malwa However, he brought misfortune upon himself by his quarrel with Madho Singh, Raja of Jaipur, Madho Singh invaded the Jat territory and defeated Jawahir Singh in 1768 He was assassinated by one of his soldiers

Jawahir Singh was a strong ruler He centralised all powers in his own hands However, he did not possess the foresight, tact and wisdom of his father But, his finances were in good order and he maintained a magnificent court

Jawahir Singh was succeeded by Ratan Singh (1768-69), Kesari Singh (1768-75), Ranjit Singh (1775-1805) and Randhir Singh, About them, Jadunath Sarkar writes, "Brain and character alike were wanting among the successors of Jawahir Singh, and in addition, the lack of a strong man at the head of the state let loose all the selfishness and factiousness among the other members of the royal family which completed the national downfall in a few years Ranjit Singh entered into a defensive and offensive alliance with the English in September 1803 and fought with them in the battle of Laswari against Daulat Rao Scindia However, in 1804, he joined Yashwant Rao Holkar in his attack on Delhi against the English The

English besieged Dig and captured it They then laid siege to Bharatpur but Ranjit Singh repulsed four successive assaults of General Lake However, he made peace with the English East India Company in April 1805 He promised to pay an indemnity of 20 lacs and desist from holding any communication with the enemies of the English or employing any European without their permission Dig was restored to him afterwards

The Rajput states

The Rajput states took advantage of the growing weakness of the Mughal Empire and freed themselves from imperial control and increased their influence in the rest of the Empire During the reigns of Farrukh-siyar and Muhammad Shah, the rulers of Amber and Marwar were appointed the Governors of the Mughal provinces like Gujarat, Malwa and Agra However, the rulers of the Rajput states were divided among themselves Bigger Rajput states tried to expand themselves at the cost of their weaker neighbours Most of them were constantly involved in petty quarrels and civil wars In most of the Rajput states, there was corruption, intrigues and treachery Ajit Singh of Marwar was killed by his own son At one stage, the Rajputs controlled the entire territory extending from South of Delhi to Surat on the Western coast However, they failed to consolidate their position on account of their internal dissensions Their outlook was essentially parochial, Clan traditions fostered isolation, rivalry and conflict The disappearance of the imperial authority intensified clan rivalry There was no longer imperial control over inter-state disputes Every state was free to strike at its neighbours Succession disputes led to civil war which often invited external intervention The situation was worsened by the expansionist policy of the Marathas Instead of the

Rajput princes as useful allies, the Marathas exploited them for money and dissensions among them to serve their own interests

Marwar (Jodhpur)

The two leading Rajput clans at the beginning of the reign of Bahadur Shah I were the Rathors of Marwar and Bikaner and the Kachchhwahas of Amber (Jaipur) Aurangzeb's intolerance and persecution had alienated the Rajputs The result was that the prominent Rajput rulers like Ajit Singh of Marwar, Amar Singh of Mewar (Udaipur) and Jay Singh of Amber sought to cast off their allegiance to the Mughal Empire and assert their independence When Bahadur Shah proceeded to subdue them, Amar Singh sent his brother to Agra with a letter of congratulations, 100 gold coins, one thousand rupees and some costly presents, Bahadur Shah also brought Amber under his control and made it over to Bijay Singh who was the younger brother of Jai Singh Ajit Singh of Jodhpur also tendered submission He received the title of Maharaja and the rank of 3500 Zat and 3000 Sawar In view of the Sikh rising in the Punjab, Bahadur Shah adopted a policy of conciliation in relation to the Rajputs between October 1708 and June 1710 In October 1708, Jai Singh and Ajit Singh were restored to their ranks in the Mughal service

During the confusion which followed the death of Bahadur Shah Ajit Singh "after forbidding cow-killing and the call of prayer from the Alamgiri mosque, besides ejecting the Imperial officers from Jodhpur and destroying their houses, entered the Imperial territory and took possession of Ajmer" Sayyid Husain Ali was sent to subdue Ajit Singh How ever, letters were also sent to Raja Ajit Singh asking him to make away with Husain Ali in any way he could and if he did so, he

would receive rewards and also the whole of the property of Husain Ali Ajit Singh did not offer any opposition and concluded a treaty according to one article of which he agreed to marry one of his daughters to Farrukh-siyar

During the reign of Farrukh-siyar, the houses of Jodhpur and Jaipur played a conspicuous part in the politics of Delhi and added to their kingdoms a large portion of the Empire Ajit Singh was the grovernor Ajmer and Gujarat which he held till 1721 Ajit Singh secretly assisted the Marathas in their movements in Western India After the fall of the Sayyid Brothers, Ajit Singh was removed from the Government of Gujarat Ajit Singh met with tragic death at the hands of his son Bakht Singh in 1724 Ajit Singh had cooperated with the Sayyid Brothers in the overthrow of Farrukh-siyar and the people of Delhi called him Damad Kush (Slayer of son-in-law)

Abhai Singh the eldest son of Ajit Singh, ruled over Marwar till his death in 1749 He served as the Mughal Governor of Gujarat His invasion of Bikaner involved him in a struggle with Sawai Jai Singh of Amber Abhai Singh secured a complete victory in the battle of Gangwana in 1741

With the death of Abhai Singh, Marwar lost its internal political stability and the state suffered from a protracted civil war on the issue of succession During the long reign of Bijay Singh (1752-92) Marwar came to the verge of dissolution For that sorry state, the Maratha invasions and the growing power of the turbulent Rathor nobility were responsible

Amber (Jaipur)

The greatest Rajput ruler of the first half of eighteenth

century was Sawai Jai Singh of Amber (1699-1743) Tod describes him as a statesman, legislator and man of science" He founded the city of Jaipur which was "the only city in India built upon a regular plan with streets bisecting each other at right angles " While building the new city of Jaipur Jai Singh utilised the plans of several European cities collected by him He was deeply interested in mathematics and astronomy He studied Greek and modern European treatises on mathematics in addition to Indian books on the subject At his instance, some Greek and European works on mathematics and some Arabic works on astronomy were translated into Sanskrit He built well-equipped observatories in Jaipur, Delhi, Ujjain, Banaras and Mathura He invited to Jaipur the Jesuit Father Boudier from Bengal and Father Andre Strobl and Antoine Gabelsperguer from Germany to help him in the task of building those observatories He procured astronomical tables from Portugal The instruments put in the above observatories were very accurate, His own astronomical observations were remarkably accurate He prepared a set of tables to enable people to make astronomical observations, He got translated into Sanskrit Euclid's Elements of Geometry Napier's work on the construction and use of Logarithms was also translated into Sanskrit Jai Singh was also a social reformer He tried to reduce the expenditure incurred in connection with the marriages of daughters

Sawai Jai Singh played an important part in Imperial politics and served as Subahdar of Agra and Malwa but he did not make any contribution to the preservation of the disintegrating Mughal Empire, He found that it was not possible to resist the Marathas in Malwa and hence "he only made a show of fight and preferred the policy of buying them off for the time

with a part of the money given to him by the Mughal Government, pocketing the balance" As the Subahdar of Agra, he used his power and influence in extending and consolidating his hereditary dominion He intervened in a disputed succession in Bundi He was defeated by the Rathors in the battle of Gangwana in 1714 He performed the Asvamedha sacrifice

The Maratha advance into Malwa served as a "convenient starting point for raids into Rajputana" The Marathas defeated and killed, Girdhhar Bahadur, its Subahdar on 29 November 1729 His cousin Daya Bahadur was also killed On 22 April 1734, Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Sindia attacked Bundi That caused alarm in the whole of Rajasthan to prepare a concerted plan for checking Maratha spoliation of their countries However, nothing came out of it

Sawai jai Singh died on 21 September 1743 There was a struggle between Ishwari Singh and his younger brother Madho Singh Ishwari Singh tried to keep Madho Singh satisfied by heavy concessions to him Ishwari Singh's reign of seven years (1743-50) was one long struggle with his younger brother Madho Singh and his Rajput and Maratha allies, Jagat Singh supported the claim of his nephew Madho Singh and advanced towards Jaipur However, with the support of the Marathas, Ishwari Singh defeated the Rana in February 1745, The Rana managed to secure the help of Malhar Rao Holkar, In March 1747, a combined army consisting of the troops of Marwar and Bundi assisted by Holkar's troops under his son Khande Rao was defeated in the battle of Rajmahal At the end of 1750, Jaipur had to stiffer from "a new and disastrous visitation of the Marathas' and saw a resolution it] its affairs Ishwari Singh committed suicide in December 1750 and Madho Singh occupied the throne of Jaipur In the war of succession, the Marathas became the

arbiters of Rajputana, After ascending the throne of Jaipur, Madho Singh adopted an anti-Maratha Policy

Mewar (Udaipur)

Mewar was great when it was ruled by Rana Sangram Singh who was known as Hindupat, After his defeat in 1527 and death in 1528, Mewar was weakened by internal dissensions and external invasions Its long resistance to Akbar and Jahangir also weakened her Although Mewar accepted Mughal suzerainty in 1615, it remained isolated from the Imperial court Amber and Marwar were in the limelight In the seventeenth century, the only capable ruler of Mewar was Raj Singh who fought against Aurangzeb In the eighteenth century, the weak rulers of Mewar were not able to control the ambitious and factious nobility and resist external invasions Sangram Singh II ruled from 1710 to 1733, In his reign, symptoms of internal disintegration came to the surface, Jagat Singh 11 ruled from 1734 to 1751 In January 1736, Peshwa Baji Rao appeared at the Southern frontier of Mewar, Jagat Singh welcomed him at Udaipur and signed a treaty by which he promised to pay an annual tribute Jagat Singh had no strength of character, In the reign of his successor Pratap Singh II, (1751-54), the Marathas exacted large contributions front Mewar which was tormented by disputed successions During the reign of Raj Singh II (1754-61), the repeated invasions of his country by the Marathas so exhausted it that the Rana was compelled to ask pecuniary aid from the Brahman of revenue, to enable him to marry the Rathor chieftain's daughter , Even after 1761, the Maratha raids into Rajasthan sucked its life-blood and added to the woes of its unhappy people The Maratha invasions resulted in anarchy, plunder, economic ruin and humiliation of the Rajputs who entered into subsidiary alliances with the English East India

Company during the Governor-Generalship of Lord Hastings in 1818

The Sikhs

The Sikhs were transformed into a militant and fighting community under Guru Har Govind (1600-1645) The execution of Guru Teg Bahadur forced the Sikhs to fight against the Mughals Guru Gobind Singh (1664-1708) showed considerable organisational ability and founded the military brotherhood called the Khalsa in 1699 Before that' he up his headquarters at Makhowal or Anandpur Sahib in the foothill of the Punjab A series of clashes took place between Guru Govind Singh and the Hill Rajas in which the Guru generally came out successful The organisation of the Khalsa further strengthened his hands, An open breach between the Guru and the Hill Rajas took place only in 1704 when the combined forces of a number of Hill Rajas attacked the Guru at Anandpur The Rajas retreated and pressed the Mughal Government to take action against the Guru

Aurangzeb was concerned with the growing power of the Guru and had asked the Mughal Faujdar earlier "to admonish the Guru" Aurangzeb wrote to the Governor of Lahore and the Faujdar of Sirhind, 'Wazir Khan, to help the Hill Rajas against Guru Govind Singh, The Mughal forces assaulted Anandpur but the Sikhs fought bravely and beat off all assaults When starvation began inside the fort, the Guru was forced to open the gate apparently on a promise of safe conduct by Wazir Khan However, when the forces of the Guru were crossing a swollen stream Wazir Khan suddenly attacked them Two of the sons of Guru Govind Singh were captured and on their refusal to embrance Islam, they were beheaded at Sirhind The Guru lost two of his remaining sons by another battle After that, he retired to Talwandi

It is contended that Aurangzeb was not keen to destroy the Guru and he wrote to the Governor of Lahore to "conciliate the Guru" When the Guru wrote to Aurangzeb in the Deccan apprising him of the events, Aurangzeb invited him to meet him Towards the end of 1706, the Guru set out for the Deccan and when he was still on the Aurangzeb died in 1707 After the death of Aurangzeb, Guru Govind Singh joined Bahadur Shah's camp as a noble of the rank of 5000 Zat and 5000 Sawar and accompanied him to the Deccan where he was treacherously murdered in 1708 by one of his Pathan employees

After the death of Guru Govind Singh, Banda became the leader the Sikhs He had met Guru Govind Singh just before his death and he was sent to the Punjab to continue the struggle against the Mughals When Banda arrived in the Punjab, he called upon the Sikhs to join him telling them that he would punish Wazir Khan who had cruelly murdered the sons of Guru Govind Singh and chastise the Hill Rajas who had fought against the Guru for many years The Sikh peasantry took up arms and marched under the leadership of Banda in the direction of Sirhind Banda had with him about 40,000 well-armed Sikhs He overpowered the Mughal authorities in the neighbourhood of Sirhind and captured Sirhind for wreaking vengeance on Wazir Khan who was the murderer of the sons of Guru Govind Singh Wazir Khan was killed by a musket-shot "The baggage was plundered, the elephants captured Not a single Mohammadan escaped with anything but the clothes upon his back" Banda committed great atrocities at Sirhind One Bar Singh was appointed the Governor of Sirhind Banda occupied the area between the Sutlej and the Jamuna and built the strong fort of Lohgarh at Mukhlispur, half way between Nahan and

Sadhaura He became, the Sachcha Padshah He established his headquarters at Mukhlispur and after repairing its old fort, named it Lohgarh (Iron Castle) He assumed the position of a king, counting his regnal year from the date of his conquest of Sirhind and issuing a seal for his official documents, He did not assume any royal title In his seal, he attributed his power to his master

Banda removed the Zamindars and the tillers of the soil became masters Every Sikh felt that he was superior to others and entitled to rule over them The new political order was a signal for the general rising of the Sikhs against the Mughals "They started on a career of conquest and every method, including loot and sabotage, which would cripple the resources of the enemy, was considered justified "

After invading the Gangetic Doab and occupying a large tract in the Saharanpur area, Banda retreated to the Jullundar Doab where his presence provoked a general rebellion of the Sikhs against Mughal authorities By the end of 1710, Jullundar and Hoshiarpur were occupied without striking a blow, The Sikh rising spread to Central Punjab and took the form of a religious crusade, The Manjha fell into the hands of the Sikhs who carried their arms to the very gates of Lahore

The Mughal Emperor Bahadur Shah was alarmed by the reports relating to the movements of Banda and he hastened to the Punjab, Banda was besieged in the fort of Lohgarh, but he managed to escape with many of his followers to the hills of Nahan The struggle continued The Sikhs won temporary successes and the Mughal Government tried to crush them When Bahadur Shah reached Lahore, he died there on 28 February 1712 The happenings in the Mughal court

after the death of Bahadur Shah offered a favourable opportunity to Banda to restore his control over the lost territories He occupied Sadhaura and Lohgarh He built a fort of considerable size with high and thick walls at Gurdaspur between the Beas and the Ravi, The Viceroy of Lahore marched against Banda but he was defeated A party of the Sikhs advanced towards Sirhind Its Governor marched forward to oppose Banda but he was overpowered along with his followers

Under the orders of Farrukh-siyar, Abdus Samad Khan and his son Zakariya Khan, Governor of Lahore and Faujdar of Jammu respectively, started operations against the Sikhs who were obliged to evacuate Sadhaura and Lohgarh in October 1713 Banda retreated from post to post He fought valiantly and inflicted heavy losses on the Mughals However, he was compelled to shelter himself in the fort of Gurdaspur, He was besieged by the Mughal army and was not able to collect provisions His troops suffered terribly on account of hunger In eight months, about 8,000 of them died The remaining fighters were reduced to skeletons When the Mughal troops entered the fort, Banda and his famished followers were taken prisoners on 17 December 1715 Banda, and his followers were sent to Delhi and severe tortures were inflicted upon them Banda was kept in an iron cage He was placed on the Back of an elephant His own son was killed before his eyes He himself was tortured to death on 10 June 1716

As regards the contribution of Banda, it can safely be said that he converted the Khalsa into a political instrument for the overthrow of the Mughal Empire During his time, the slogan "Raj Karega Khalsa" became the battle-cry of the Sikhs He made a bid for the establishment rule in the Punjab It was a

revolutionary step in the history Sikhs However, he failed because the Mughal Empire was deeply rooted and its power at that time was not exhausted It is true that he was able to mobilise the enthusiasm of the Sikh masses, but the upper classes had not the courage to come forward and help him openly The Mughals were helped by the Hill Rajas of the Punjab, the Jats and the Bundelas Banda did not inherit any military Organisation to fight against the professional Mughal army It is rightly pointed out that when he occupied Sirhind, he had no artillery, no elephants and not even a sufficient number of horses for his follower, It is true that he failed, but he left an important legacy for the Sikhs A new will was created among the Sikhs to resist the Mughals and to set up a state of their own in the Punjab It was this new spirit which enabled the Shikhs to create a state of their own in the Punjab after many ups and downs About Banda, Dr Ganda Singh writes, "It was through him that the path of conquest and freedom was discovered by the people of the Punjab He was the first man to deal a severe blow at the intolerant rule of the Mughals in the Punjab and to break the first sod in the conquest of that province by the Sikhs"

After the death of Banda, there was a division among the Sikhs The Bandais were the followers of Banda The orthodox Sikhs were called the Tat Khalsa Through the efforts of Bhai Mani Singh and Mata Sundri, widow of Guru Govind Singh, the differences between the two were composed in 1721

Zakariya Khan was the Mughal Governor of the Punjab from 1796 to 1745 He followed a policy of harassing and persecuting the Sikhs in every possible way Tara Singh Van and his 21 followers were killed by the Mughal troops, Zakariya Khan appealed to Muslim fanaticism and the Haidari flag was hoisted

However, the Sikhs were able to defeat the Mughal forces at a place near Bhilowal, After that, Zakariya Khan tried to placate the Sikhs who organised themselves into the Dal Khalsa under the leadership of Kapur Singh The Dal Khalsa was the army of the Sikhs Its two main divisions were the Budha Dal and the Taruna Dal The Budha Dal consisted of the army of grownup Sikhs The members of the Taruna Dal were a source of nuisance to the Mughal forces They overran the whole of tire Bari Doab and some of them crossed the Sutlej and helped Ala Singh to set up a small state Malwa

Even before the invasion of India by Nadir Shah in 1739, the Sikhs assembled at Amritsar in large numbers on the occasion of Baisakhi and Diwali, They sat together with the Holy Granth called Guru Granth in their midst, discussed questions of common interest and issued decisions in the form of resolutions called Gurmatta Those decisions were accepted by all the Sikhs as the decisions of the Guru and disobedience was looked upon as in act of sacrilege Those meetings were called Sarbat Khalsa and were held twice a year on the occasion of Baisakhi and Diwali The Mughal Government took possession of the temple of Amritsar and the Sikhs were prevented from assembling there Moving columns were sent round to haul up the Sikhs The greatest martyr of that period was the Granthi of the Golden Temple Bhai Mani Singh who had compiled the writings of Corn Govind Singh (Dasam Padshah Ka Granth) Many Sikhs left the plains and sought shelter in the Siwalik hills, the jungles of the Punjab and the desert of Rajasthan

The invasion of Nadir Shah helped the recovery of the Sikhs It enfeebled the strong Government of Zakariva khan in the Punjab The confusion and disorder created by Nadir Shah in the country also

helped the rise of the Sikhs They used that opportunity to increase their financial resources and military strength The result was that the suppression of the Sikhs became a very difficult one

The Sikhs organised themselves at a place called Dalewal and built a fort there From that place, they carried on their depredations around the country and extended them upto the very neighbourhood of Lahore Nadir Shah confirmed Zakariya Khan in the Nizamat of Lahore and the Sikhs withdrew from Lahore and its neighbourhood and carried on their activities in the Jullundar Doab The Sikhs fell upon the rear of the army of Nadir Shah when he was retreating from Delhi They were able to snatch away a lot of booty from the Afghans The result was that Zakariva Khan decided to destroy the Sikhs root and branch He placed Adina Beg incharge of Jullundar Doab and authorised him to take strong action against the Sikhs The Sikhs were hunted like wild beasts and they retired to the hills, and jungles In 1742, Haqiqat Rai was put to death Mahtab Singh, Buta Singh and Bhai Taru Singh were executed The Sikhs also hit back They attacked Sialkot and murdered all those Qazis and Mullahs who had a hand in the execution of Haqiqat Rai They plundered Gondlanwala and its Faujdar was killed Jassa Singh Ahluwalia raided Kasur with the help of other Sikh chiefs However, defeated near hills and about 7,000 of them were killed and 300 were taken prisoners This happened in 1746 and is known as the first Ghalughara (Great Holocaust).

After the death of Zakariva Khan in 1745, intrigues of the rival parties in the Mughal Court prevented immediate appointment of Governor of the Punjab The result was that disorder broke out Everywhere lawless men, plunderers and adventurers

who were in hiding so long, came out in the open and began to desolate the realm Not only the Sikhs gave trouble, even the Raja of Jammu rebelled At last, Yahya Khan, son of Zakariva Khan, was appointed the Deputy Governor of the Punjab, Yahya Khan tried to suppress the Sikhs Many Sikhs lost their lives at Shahidganj Yahya Khan passed an order for a general massacre of the Sikhs but that was prevented by a quarrel between Yahya Khan and Shah Nawaz who was another son of Zakariva Khan Whenever Yahya Khan sent troops against the Sikhs, Shah Nawaz helped the latter in various ways The result was that the Sikhs got breathing time so badly needed by them

Yahya Khan lost power in 1747 and a year later Mir Mannu became the Governor The Sikhs took full advantage of the political confusion in the Punjab created by the struggle for the Governorship of Lahore, dissensions among nobles in Delhi and the invasions of Ahmad Shah Abdali They occupied Amritsar and elected Jassa Singh Ahluwalia as supreme commander of Dal Khalsa in 1748 To serve as a base of military operations and to ensure the security of the central shrine, they built a small mud fort Ram Rauni or Raingarh, about a mile to the South of the Golden Temple A territorial base of the Sikh political power was created by the occupation of different parts of Central Punjab by different Sikh leaders

It has rightly been said that Ahmad Shah Abdali's career in India is very intimately a part of the Sikh struggle for independence His repeated invasions between 1748 and 1767 "exercised a very decisive influence on the history of the rise of the Sikh power"

When Abdali attacked India in 1748, the Sikhs pursued the retreating Afghan army upto the banks of the Indus and plundered the baggage of Abdali

Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded the Punjab again in 1750 Mir Mannu stopped his advance by promising to pay him 14 lakhs of rupees In the Punjab ceased to be a part of the Mughal Empire as a result of the third invasion of India by Abdali Mir Mannu became the Governor of Lahore and Multan on behalf of Ahmad Shah Abdali After the death of Mir Mannu in 1753, power was seized by his widow Mughlani Begam There was complete chaos in the Punjab Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India for the fourth time in 1756-57 and placed the provinces of Lahore, Sirhind, Kashmir, Thatta and Multan in the charge of his minor on Taimur with the title of Shah He plundered Amritsar, and demolished the sacred buildings and the tank The Sikhs pounced upon his tents and looted his baggage without engaging in any pitched battle

During the administration of Mir Mannu and Taimur Shah, Adina Beg played a dubious role Though he was outwardly opposed to the Sikhs, he was not prepared to crush them because that would reduce his own importance in the eyes of his Mughal and Afghan suzerains He hoped to make himself the master of the Punjab by driving out the Afghans with the help of the Marathas He invited Raghunath Rao the Marathas chief, who was stationed near Delhi with a large army and promised to pay him a liberal financial subsidy Raghunath Rao advanced to the Punjab and occupied Sirhind and Lahore in March-April 1758 He was helped by Adina Beg and the Sikhs Raghunath Rao left Lahore immediately leaving the government incharge of Adina Beg in return for an annual tribute of 75 lakhs Adina Beg died within four months and the Marathas took charge of the Punjab early in 1759 By that time, the Sikhs had established themselves in a commanding position Ahmad Shah Abdali invaded India in October 1759 He defeated the

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India for the seventh time in October 1704 He ravaged and plundered the country and placed Ala Singh of Patiala in charge of Sirhind and left for Afghanistan (1765)

The Sikhs occupied lahore, extended their territories in the Punjab, plundered the territory of Najibuddaula and entered into an alliance with the Jar chief Jawahir Singh and raided the territory of Madho Singh of Jaipur Abdali came to India for the eighth time in 1766-67 and tried to crush the Sikhs, He came twice again, up to the Chenab in 1768 and upto Peshawar in 1769, but he had to retreat on account of the rebellion of his own troops, Abdali died in 1772

On the final retreat of Abdali from the Punjab, the Sikhs reappeared in their full strength, Lahore was reoccupied and also the entire open country Between 1767 and 1773, the Sikhs extended their power from Saharanpur in the East to Attock in the West and from Multan in the South to Kangra and Jammu in the North They organised themselves into twelve Misls or confederacies The Bhangi Misl, Ahluwalia Misl, Faizullapuria Misl Ramgarhia Misl, Kanheyt Misl, Sukerchakiya Misl, Nakhai Misl, Dalewalia Misl, Karorasinghia Misl, Nishanwalia Misl, Phulkia Misl and Shahids Misl or Nihangs' Misl It is difficult to calculate the exact fighting strength of the Sikh Misls It is generally estimated that their total strength was about one lakh Cavalry was the backbone of the armies of the Misls There was no regular training for the soldiers The weapons commonly used by them were swords, spears, match-locks, sabres etc The soldiers of the Misls believed more in guerilla warfare than in pitched battles Most of the Misls were annexed by Maharaja Ranjit Singh and some of them accepted the protection of the English East India Company it was under the

leadership of Maharaja Ranjit Singh that the Sikhs were able to establish a strong sovereign state in the Punjab He died in 1839 and after the two Sikh Wars the Punjab was annexed by Lord Dalhousie in 1849

The success of the Sikhs was due to many reasons One reason was the method of their warfare The Sikhs were weak in organisation, equipment and arms and could not face the well-equipped Mughal and Afghan armies They adopted hit and run tactics They took full advantage of their knowledge of local geography They had unparalleled capacity for endurance Another cause was their moral ardour The Sikhs were dedicated soldiers who were fighting for their freedom They fought against the disintegrating, but cruel and oppressive Mughal power The religious fervour of the Sikhs gave them an inexhaustible fountain of strength and a perennial stimulant to sacrifice It was the spirit infused in the Sikhs by Guru Govind Singh which enabled them to establish a sovereign state in the Punjab The Sikh war of independence was not a war led by an individual, It was a people's war The victory was not won by the genius of a single great leader It was the reward of the sacrifices made by all the Sikhs

Jammu and Kashmir

Jammu was, under the rule of a Hindu Rajput dynasty lot a long time The Mughal Emperors kept a Muslim Faujdar at Jammu to realise tributes from the hill states and to suppress any revolt in the region So long as the tribute was paid, he did not interfere in their internal affairs

Farrukh-siyar appointed Zakariya Khan as the Faujdar of Jammu 1713 Banda had recovered Lohgarh by that time He was besieged by the Mughal army He held his ground for 6 months and then escaped to

the hılls Zakarıya Khan pursued hım, captured a number of Sıkhs and sent theır heads to Delhı where they were produced before Farrukh-sıyar on 13 December 1713 Zakarıya Khan was gıven a robe of honour and the rank of 3,000 Zat and 1,000 Sawar Zakarıya Khan was present ın the sıege of Banda at Gurdas Nangal near Gurdaspur Banda faced the Mughal army for 8 months and surrendered on 17 December 1715 along wıth 740 followers Zakarıya Khan accompanıed those prısoners first to Lahore and then to Delhı and partıcıpated ın theır processıon ın the streets of Delhı

Wıth the declıne of the Mughal Empıre, the Raja of jammu began to assert hıs, ındependence In about 1746, he started payıng trıbute to the Mughals Jammu was under Raja Ranjıt Deo from 17 141 to 1781 He took full advantage of the confused polıtıcal condıtıon ın the Punjab and extended hıs authorıty over all the hılls between the Chenab and Ravı and over some of those lyıng to the West of the Chenab, Ranjıt Deo was a dependable ally of Ahmad Shah Abdalı He helped hım ın conquerıng Kashmır ın 1752 and agaın ın 1762 In Aprıl 1757 Ahmad Shah Abdalı granted hım three Parganas of Zafarwal, Sankhatra and Aurangabad He struck coıns ın hıs own name, Durıng hıs reıgn, the cıty of Jammu prospered and became a centre of trade Even rıch bankers, merchants and hıgh officıals of Lahore and Delhı found refuge at Jammu, Durıng the thırd ınvasıon of Indıa by Ahmad Shah Abdalı ın 1751-52, Mır Martın sent hıs famıly and treasures to the care of Raja Ranjıt Deo In about 1770, Ranjıt Deo submıtted to Jhanda Sıngh Bhangı and agreed to pay trıbute Ranjıt Deo dıed ın 1781 He was succeeded by hıs son Brıj Raı Deo, Durıng hıs reıgn, the Jammu stave came completely under the control of the Sıkhs

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in gunny bags and threw them into the Dal Lake to be drowned Abdullah Khan (1796-1800) collected one crore of rupees as his personal wealth Ata Muhammad Khan forcibly seized petty girls to satisfy his lust There was great unrest in the province It was conquered by Ranjit Singh in 1819

The Marathas

The most important challenge to the decaying mughal Empire came from the Marathas who produced a number of brilliant commanders, and statesmen at that time However, they lacked unity and hence failed to replace the Mughals They waged a continuous war against be Mughal Empire till it was completely destroyed

When Aurangzeb died in 1707, Sahu was a prisoner since 1689 He was released in 1707 A civil war broke out, between Sahu at Satara and Tara Bai, widow of Raja Ram, at Kohlapur The Maratha chiefs sided with one party or the other They took full advantage of the situation and increased their influence by bargaining Many of them even intrigued with the Mughal Viceroys of the Deccan A new system of Maratha Government was evolved under the leadership of Balaji Vishwanath who was the Peshwa of Sahu

Balaji Vishwanath

Balaji Vishwanath (1714-20) rose to power step He rendered loyal and useful service to Sahu and supposed his enemies and rivals He excelled in diplomacy and won over many Maratha chiefs to the side of Sahu In recognition of his services Sahu made him his Peshwa Gradually, Balaji Vishwanath consolidated Sahu's hold and also his own over the Maratha chiefs The Peshwa concentrated all power in his office, As a matter of fact, Balaji Vishwanath and

his son Baji Rao made the Peshwa the functional head of he Maratha Empire

Balaji Vishwanath took full advantage of the internal conflicts of the Mughal officials and increased the Maratha power He induced Zulfiqar Khan to pay Chatith and Sardeshmukhi of the Deccan He signed a pact with the Sayyid Brothers All the territories which had formed the kingdom of Shivaji, were restored to Sahu who was given the right to Chauth and Sardeshmukhi of the six provinces of the Deccan, In return, Sahu recognised Mughal suzerainty He agreed to place a body of 15,000 cavalry at the service of the Mughal Emperor to prevent rebellions and plundering in the Deccan He was also to pay an annual tribute of Rs 10 lakhs In 1719, Balaji Vishwanath accompanied Sayyid Husain Ali to Delhi at the head of a Maratha force and helped the Sayyid Brothers in overthrowing Farrukh-siyar While in Delhi, he and the other Maratha chiefs saw with their own eyes the weakness of the Mughal Empire and they were filled with the ambition to expand Maratha power in Northern India For the efficient collection of Chaurth and Sardeshmukhi of tire Deccan Balaji Vishwanath assigned separate areas to Maratha chiefs who kept the greater part of the collection for expenses, An increasing number of Maratha chiefs began to flock side of the Peshwa They gradually settled down in various regions as more or less autonomous chiefs. The conquests by the Marathas outside their original kingdom were made by a central army directly controlled by the Maratha kings or the Peshwa but by the Maratha chiefs with their private armies Their interests clashed with one another If the Peshwa strictly enforced his authority over them they did not hesitate to join the Mughals, the Nizam or the English East India Company

Baji Rao I

Balaji Vishwanath was succeeded as Peshwa by his son Baji Rao I (1720-40) He was a hold and brilliant commander and an ambitious, and clever statesman Under his leadership, the Marathas waged numerous campaigns against the Mughal Empire to compel the Mughal officials first to give them the right to collect Chauth of the vast areas and then to cede thost, areas to the Maratha kingdom He defeated the Nizam in the battle near Bhopal in 1738 By the time of his death in 1740, the Marathas had established their control over Malwa, Gujarat and parts of Bundelkhand The Maratha families of Sindhia, Holkar, Gaekwad and Bhonsle came into prominence, Baji Rao changed the character of the Maratha state From the kingdom of Maharashtra, it was transformed, into an Empire expanding in Northern India, New territories were conquered and occupied but little attention was paid to their administration The Maratha chiefs were mainly concerned with the collection of revenue and not the welfare of the people

Balaji Baji Rao

Baji Rao was succeeded by Balaji Baji Rat, and he was Peshwa from 1740 to 1761 He was as able as his father, but not so energetic When Sahu died in 1749, the work of management of the affairs of the state fell into the hand of the Peshwa who became the official head of the administration He shifted the Government to Poona, He extended the Maratha Empire in different directions Maratha armies overran the whole of Northern India Maratha control over Malwa, Gujarat and Bundelkhand was consolidated Bengal was repeatedly invaded In 1751, the Nawab of Bengal had to give Orissa to the Marathas In the South, the state of Mysore and other minor principalities were forced to pay tribute In 1760, the Nizam of Hyderabad

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Deccan and Hindustan proper On account of its central position, this province had great strategic importance, The highways of commerce and military routes to the Deccan and Gujarat passed through it and armies based in Malwa could strike at Rajputana or Bundelkhand with the greatest case

Malwa was first conquered by Humayun and then by Akbar and it enjoyed peace for more than a century, but that peace was disturbed by Aurangzeb's policy of religious persecution The result was that the provincial administration lost its efficiency The discontented Rajput chiefs, Zamindars and their Hindu subjects refused to cooperate with the Mughal Subedar and they welcomed the Maratha invaders, gave them secret information about rivers, fords and mountain passes and facilitated their invasions

According to Sir Jadunath Sarkar, the first invasion of Malwa by the Marathas took place in 1699 They crossed the Narmada and ravaged places near Dhamuni and retired The path thus opened was never again closed till Malwa passed into the hands of the Marathas in the middle of the eighteenth century In 1703, Nemaji Sindia burst into Malwa and plundered and burnt the villages The Mughal Emperor had to despatch a special force to stop his advance Maratha raids were repeated with greater boldness in the next decade

When the Mughal Emperor granted the right of Chauth and Sardeshmukhi to the Marathas in 1719, Khandesh and Malwa were assigned to the Peshwa for making collection, The Peshwa looked upon the possession of Malwa as the best guarantee for the security of Maratha Mother land anti the Deccan Peshwa Baji Rao invaded Malwa in February 1723 and May 1724 He collected Chauth and met Nizam-ul-

Mulk who was the Governor of Malwa at that tıme In June 1725, Gırdhar Bahadur was appoınted the Subedar of Malwa The new Subedar was a man of strong character, and he refused to compromıse wıth the Marathas and chased them beyond the Narmada It was after the defeat of Nızam-ul-Mulk at Palkhed ın February 1728 that the Peshwa was able to Lake actıon agaınst Gırdhar Bahadur A bıg army led by Peshwa's brother Chımnajı Appa ınvaded Malwa Gırdhar Bahadur was defeated and kılled Bhavanı Ram, the son of Gırdhar Bahadur held up Maratha advance for some tıme but faıled There was utter confusıon ın Malwa No money or reınforcements could be obtaıned from the Mughal Emperor The troops clamoured for theır arrears The mountaın passes ınto Malwa were lost to the Marathas and wıthın a decade, Malwa passed the hands of Marathas

Towards the end of 1729, Sawaı Jaı Sıngh was appoınted the Governor of Malwa Realısıng the dıfficulty of resıstıng the Marathas he adopted the polıcy of appeasement The Mughal Emperor got, suspıcıous and he was replaced by Muhammad, Khan Bangash who to the Marathas The polıo of Muhammad Khan Bangash was Jaı Sıngh was agaın appoınted the Subedar of Malwa ın 1732 He pursued hıs old polıcy of appeasıng the Marathas He based p by sharıng wıth the Marathas the large sums sent to from Delhı for the defence of the provınce The Mughal campaıgns ın 173436 faıled to keep Malwa free from the aggressıon of the Marathas The polıcy of appeasement was not successful and fresh concessıons called forth fresh aggressıon In 1738, after hıs defeat at Bhopal, Nızam-ul-Mulk offered to the Peshwa the whole of Malwa and the complete sovereıgnty of the terrıtory between the Narmada and the Chambal The Nızam wıts not able to secure the approval of the

Mughal Emperor and the matter remained unsettled In 1741, Peshwa Balaji Baji Rao advanced to Gwalior and a settlement was made with the Mughal Emperor through the mediation of Sawai jai Singh who was then the Subedar of Agra Emperor Muhammad Shah bestowed the Deputy Governorship of Malwa on the Peshwa This was merely a device for saving the face of the Emperor as otherwise Malwa ceased to be a part of the Empire of Delhi

Gujarat

Internal strife among the Mughals in Gujarat gave the Marathas a chance to fish in troubled waters and establish themselves firmly in that province Civil war among the Mughals began in 1724 was replaced by Sarbuland Khan as the Subedar of Gujarat At that time, Hamid Khan, the uncle of the Nizam, was acting as the Deputy of the Nizam in Gujarat Sarbuland Khan himself a Delhi and sent his Deputy Shujat Khan to take charge from Hamid Khan Hamid Khan also wanted to become the ruler of Gujarat and got the of the Marathas by conceding them the right, to collect Chauth and Sardeshmukhi With the help of Kanthaji, Hamid Khan defeated and killed Shujat Khan and his brother Rustam Ali who came from Surat Sarbuland Khan himself marched to Gujarat and expelled Hamid Khan, Not he could not expel the Marathas In 1727, Sarbuland Khan agreed to pay the Marathas Chauth and Sardeshmukhi in Gujarat The Mughal Emperor did not approve of the arrangement, recalled Sarbuland Khan, and sent Raja Abhay Singh as the Governor of Gujarat with orders to turn out the Marathas from Gujarat In order to overawe the Marathas, Abhay Singh got Pilaji Gaikwar, a Maratha leader, killed That resulted in a widespread upheaval among the local population Damaji, the eldest son of Pilaji, renewed the struggle, recovered Baroda and

harassed Abhay Sıngh so much that the latter left for ȷodhpur wıthout any success Damaȷı even ınvaded Jodhpur Guȷarat was finally lost the Empıre ın 1737

Mysore

Another ımportant state whıch emerged ın South Indıa was Mysore under Hyder Alı The kıngdom of Mysore had preserved ıts precarıous ındependence ever sınce the end of the Vıȷayanagar Empıre Early ın the eıghteenth century, two mınısters Nanȷaraȷ and Devaraȷ seızed power ın Mysore and reduced the kıng Chıkka Krıshna Raȷ to a mere puppet

Hyder Alı started hıs career as a petty officer ın the Mysore army Though uneducated, he possessed a keen ıntellect He was a man of great energy, darıng and determınatıon, He was also a brıllıant commander and shrewd dıplomat By dınt of hıs mılıtary skıll and qualıtıes of leadershıp, he became the Fauȷdar of Dındıgal ın 1755 He mısapproprıated the revenues of Dındıgal and managed to raıse an' ındependent army of hıs own In 1761, be overthrew Nanȷaraȷ and Devaraȷ and establıshed hıs own authorıty ın the state of' Mysore In 1763, be occupıed Bednore He strengthened hıs financıal posıtıon by ' the booty that fell ınto hıs hands He conquered Canara He set up hıs capıtal at Serıngapatam He created a strong war machıne wıthın a short tıme

From the very begınnıng, Hyder Alı had straıned relatıons wıth the Englısh East Indıa Company He had secured valuable help from the French For hıs 'help agaınst the Brıtısh, Count Lally had agreed to pay Hyder Alı Rs 10,000/ per month and also the forts of Thaıgur and Elvanasore After the expulsıon of the Brıtısh, Hyder Alı was expected to get Trıchınopoly, Maduraı, Tınnevelly etc A Brıtısh force under Maȷor More was routed Howeveı, Sır Eyre Coote captured

Villenore When Pondicherry surrendered to the British in 1761, Hyder Ali took bout 300 French soldiers in his service There was also hostility between Hyder Ali and Muhammad Ali, the Nawab of Carnatic There were many districts in Carnatic which were claimed both by Hyder Ali and Muhammad Ali Muhammad Ali allowed British troops to be stationed at Vellore but the same was resented by Hyder Ali Hyder Ali took into service Raja Sahib, son of Chanda Sahib and gave protection to Mahfuz Khan, brother and rival of Muhammad Ali

After the collapse of the French power in Southern India, Hyder Ali tried to patch up with the English East India Company but failed The Madras Government encouraged the Nizam to take up arms against Hyder Ali and offered to give necessary military help for that purpose The Nizam had the support of the Marathas, In November 1767, the Madras Government concluded a treaty with the Nizam by which it agreed to pay him a tribute of Rs 5 lakhs for the Northern Circars It also promised not to, acquire the Circar of Guntoor so long as Balasat fang lived The British promised military help to the Nizam against his enemies, The Madras Government was keen to acquire Carnatic and Balaghat which were held by Hyder Ali and agreed to pay Rs 7 lakhs to the Nizam for its Diwani This was impliedly acknowledgement of the sovereignty of the Nizam over the dominions of Hyder Ali Both the Nizam and the English Company were keen to prey upon the territories of Hyder Ali and the British Government agreed to help him The Nizam advanced into Mysore in August 1767 Hyder Ali was able to win over the Marathas and the Nizam and the British were left alone The opposition of Hyder Ali and his son Tipu was formidable Tipu was able to reach near Madras

itself and the Madras authorities entered into a peace treaty with Hyder Ali in April 1709, Both the parties agreed to give up the territories conquered by them

In 1770, Mysore was invaded by Peshwa Madhav Rao, Hyder Ali approached the Madras Government for help but the same was refused In August 1778, the British attacked Pondicherry and after its occupation, they sent an expedition against Mahe Hyder Ali sent his troops to defend Mahe but in spite of that, it was captured by the British in March 1779

Second Mysore War started in 1780 and continued tip to 1784 The army of Hyder Ali was so near Madras that many of its residents ran away The towns of Porto Novo and Conjeevaram were plundered Hyder Ali occupied Arcot, capital of Carnatic, However, Hyder Ali was defeated by Coote Hyder Ali died in December 1782 but the war was continued his son Tipu The Second Mysore War was ended by the treaty of Mangalore in May 1784. Both parties agreed to restore the conquests made by them

The Third Mysore War was fought from 1790 to 1792 in the time Lord Cornwallis Tipu was defeated By the treaty of Seringapatam signed in March 1792, Tipu had to give up half of his territory

The Fourth Mysore War was fought in the time of Lord Wellesley Lord Wellesley demanded absolute submission from Tipu and, as he refused to do so, war was declared Tipu tied fighting at Seringapatam in May 1799 After the war, Lord Wellesley annexed large and important territories of Mysore Some territory was given to the Nizam as a replaced A child of the Hindu family ousted by Hyder Ali in 1761 was placed on the throne of Mysore Mysore continued to flourish under the control of the Government of India during the nineteenth century The state of Mysore was still

there when India became independent in 1947 Now its name been changed into Karnatak

Carnatic

Carnatic was one of the Subahs of the Deccan and was under the authority of the Nizam As the Nizam became independent of Mughal control, the Deputy Governor of Carnatic, known as the Nawab of Carnatic, freed himself from he control of the Viceroy of the Deccan and made his office hereditary Nawab Saadatullah Khan of Carnatic made his nephew Dost Ali his successor without the approval of his superior, the Nizam

The Peshwa wanted to occupy Carnatic but the Nizam was equally determined to defend it as it was a part of the Deccan Subah To begin with, the Nizam tried to undermine the position of Raja Sahu by granting Jagirs to those Maratha officers who turned hostile to their maser The Nizam also entered into a league with Sambhaji, the rival of Sahu In 1727 when the Peshwa was proceeding to Cainant, the Nizam wrote to Sahu that until his dispute with Sambhaji was settled he would not pay Chauth and he must accept his mediation in it Without waiting for reply, the Nizam invaded the Maratha kingdom and did a lot of destruction Peshwa Baji Rao hit back and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Nizam in 1728 at Palkhed This defeat unnerved the Nizam and he sued for peace After 1740, the affairs of Carnatic deteriorated on account of the repeated struggles for its Nawabship That gave the British an opportunity to interfere in Carnatic

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British Rule in India

The report of India's wealth spread by English travellers like Ralph Fitch and Mildenhall as also the publication of the Eastern expeditions of Dutchmen, aroused in the minds of the Englishmen a strong desire to share in the lucrative Eastern trade The victory of the English over the Spanish Armada stimulated their maritime enterprise and urged them on to seek colonial and commercial expansion So a body of London merchants applied to Queen Elizabeth for a charter granting them privilege of trading in the East The Queen acceded to their prayer and granted them a charter incorporating the East India Company under the title of "The Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies " The Company was given the monopoly or exclusive right to trade with India for fifteen years Its affairs were to be managed by a Government and a Committee of "twenty-four" named in the charter but afterwards they were to be annually elected by the subscribers This committee subsequently developed into the Court of Directors Besides, there was a 'General Court' composed to shareholders Subsequently this court came to be known as the Court of Proprietors In 1609 the position of the Company was strengthened by a fresh charter granted by James I By it the Company's privileges were extended for an indefinite period without any time limit But the charter was subject to revocation on three years notice

At first the Company organised 'Separate voyages' in which each fleet was despatched by a particular group of subscribers who divided among themselves the profits arising from their venture Joint-stock enterprises embracing the whole body of subscribers began in 1661 The first two voyages were directed chiefly to the Spice Islands The Company established a factory at Bantam in Java and did some trade but encountered serious opposition from the Dutch The third voyage is memorable for the landing of Capital Hawkins at Surat in 1608 Hawkins went to the court of Jahangir who received him favourably and granted the English permission to settle at Surat But this conclusion was revoked under the pressure of Portuguese influence at the Mughul Court Thus with the Dutch opposition in the Malaya Archipelago and Portuguese opposition in India, the position of the East India Company during the early stages of its existence was one of the considerable difficulty Besides foreign opposition, the Company had to face severe criticism at home Its monopoly of trade in the East provoked jealousy and aroused opposition Its export of bullion for the purchase of oriental commodities was looked upon as bad foreign trade diminishing the wealth of the country

English victory over Portuguese

Despite these difficulties the Company continued to carry on with commendable zeal Its prospects brightened up in 1612 when Captain Best defeated a Portuguese fleet off Swally near Surat This victory damaged the prestige of the Portuguese and heightened that of the English As a consequence Jahangir granted a *farman* to the English, allowing them to establish a permanent factory at Surat (1613) Two years later the English obtained another naval victory over the Portuguese and followed up these

initial advantages by deciding to send a duly accredited Ambassador to the Mughal Court Accordingly in 1615 came Sir Thomas Roe to the court of Jahangir as Ambassador from King James I of England His mission was to secure permanent trading facilities for the Company and to conclude a definite treaty for the purpose Roe was a cultured gentleman and a trained diplomat He did much to foil the intrigues of the Portuguese and to raise the prestige of the English in India Although he failed to secure a commercial treaty from the Emperor he got several important privileges for the Company as well as permission to establish factories at certain places within the Mughul Empire In the annals of the Company, Roe is memorable for the policy he outlined for the English in India He set his face against the policy of militarism which the Dutch and Portuguese pursued in the East, and advised his countrymen to "seek profit at sea and in quiet trade"

Company's war with the Mughuls

During the last quarter of the seventeenth century the Company for a while departed from the pacific policy laid down by Sir Thomas Roe and attempted a spirited war policy This change was in part due to the troubled political situation of the time Aurangzeb's protracted warfare with the Marathas led to a breakdown of the internal order which was absolutely necessary for the peaceful pursuit of trade Shivaji twice sacked Surat and threatened the English factory there He passed perilously close to Madras on his way to capture Jinji Occurrences like these clearly showed that the English could not expect security even under such a powerful ruler as Aurangzeb In Bengal they had troubles from its governor, Shayasta Khan It was in these circumstances that Gerald Aungier, Governor of Bombay, wrote to the Directors that "Times now

require you to manage your commerce with your sword in your hands" This sentiment was echoed in one of the despatches of the Directors in which they urged the Madras Council "to establish such a politic of civil and military power and create and secure such a large revenue as may be the foundation of a large, well-grounded, sure English dominion in India for all time to come This departure from the traditional policy of peace is associated with the names of Sir Josia Child and Sir John Child This policy was no doubt prophetic but the time was not yet ripe for it

Thus when the English were in a bellicose mood a dispute concerning customs duties precipitated their conflict with Aurangazeb In 1751 the Company had received from Shuja, the Subadar of Bengal, a *farman* which allowed them to compound the customs duties for a fixed annual payment of Rs 3,000 On the strength of this *farman* and other concessions granted by Aurangzeb the English in Bengal evaded all sorts of State dues Nawab Shayasta Khan, Aurangzeb's viceroy of Bengal traders There upon the English began hostilities by sacking Hughli in 1686 Shayasta Khan retaliated by seizing all the English factories within his reach repulsed the English from Hughli and compelled them to retire to Sutanati and thence to the fever stricken island Hijli Aurangzeb now gave order for a general attack on all the English settlements Meanwhile an English naval force was sent out from England under Captain Heath with order to capture Chittagong He rescued the English at Hijli, bombarded and burnt Balasore but failed in an attack on Chittagong and sailed back to Madras On the west Sir John Child, Governor of Bombay, seized many Mughul vessels and sent his captains to the Red Sea and Persian Gulf to arrest the pilgrim traffic to Mecca Aurangzeb in consequence seized the English factory

at Surat, imprisoned the factors, blockaded Bombay and ordered the expulsion of all Englishmen from his dominions Realising the hopelessness of the struggle the English hastened to make peace Aurangzeb was also inclined to lend a willing ear to their proposals as he had no naval force strong enough to cope with the English at sea Hence peace was concluded and Aurangzeb granted the English pardon and a new license for trade on condition of paying a heavy fine and restoring the goods captured from Mughulship (1690)

Job Charnok had been trying to establish a settlement on the present site of Calcutta since 1686 but had to abandon his project on account of the outbreak of hostilities with Aurangzeb But after the conclusion of the peace he was permitted to establish a factory at Sutanati in 1690 In 1696 occurred the rebellion of Sova Singh a Zamindar of Burdwan It caused great panic and as a measure of security the English were permitted to fortify their new factory Two years later they were permitted to purchase the villages of Sutanati, Kalikata and Govindapur, and the city which began to grow on the sites of these villages, came to be known as Calcutta In 1700 the fortified factory was named Fort William after King William III of England and became the seat of presidency under a President and a council

The United Company

Towards the close of the seventeenth century the Company had to meet serious opposition at home Its monopoly of trade in the East had created many enemies and they got a welcome opportunity to attack it when the Company's war with Aurangzeb ended in disaster and humiliation Opposition to the Company took many forms There were those who regarded the

export of bullion by the Company as detrimental to the economic interests of the country according to the prevailing mercantile theory Others attacked the joint-stock organisation of the Company, while a third group inveighed against it as resting upon a too narrow and exclusive basis The Whig Party supported the opponents of the Company and in 1694 Parliament passed a resolution that "all the subjects of England have equal right to trade to the East Indies, unless prohibited by Act of Parliament " In 1698 a new company was formed under the Title "The English Company trading to the East Indies" There followed a ruinous competition between the old company and the new and the contest between the two both at home and the East was bitter and undignified An agreement was, however, arrived at in 1702 The final settlement took place in 1708 when by the award of Godolphin all disputed points were set at rest and the two companies were amalgamated under the title of the "United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East Indies " This United Company is better known as "The Honourable East India Company" and it continued its corporate existence down to the Sepoy Mutiny (1858)

After the amalgamation the constitution of the company was somewhat modified The old committee of twenty-four was superseded by twenty-four managers, twelve to be selected by each company

In 1715 the Company sent an embassy under John Surman to Emperor Farrukshiyar to secure compre-hensive commercial privileges throughout the Mughul Empire An English surgeon named William Hamilton accompanied the embassy and he cured the Emperor of a painful disease As a reward for this medical service the Company received imperial *farmans* by which certain villages near Calcutta and Madras were made over to the Company and its

servants in India were allowed to reside wherever they might choose The right of the English to trade in Bengal free of all duties but subject to the payment of Rs 3,000 per annum, was also recognised Other concessions were granted including exemption from payment of customs duties at Surat in return for a lump sum of Rs 10,000 to be paid annually The Company was also allowed the right of coining and issuing money from the Bombay mint These farmans granted substantial and even extraordinary privileges and so may be regarded as forming the Magna Charta of the Company

Since Godolphin's award of 1708 the Company's position improved both at home and abroad and it entered upon a period of progress and prosperity But it was greatly worried by the rivalry of the Ostened merchants of the Netherlands who began by sending single vessels to the East and eventually secured a charter of incorporation in 1722 from Emperor Charles VI Thus was formed the Ostened Company which founded two settlements in India, one at Banikbazar (Banikipur) on the Hughli, and the other at Covelong near Madras It drove a thriving trade but was looked upon with the most intense jealousy both by the English and the Dutch Before long the Company became a thorny problem of European diplomacy very embarrassing to Charles VI AT last Charles suppressed the Company in 1731 in order to win England's support to the Pragmatic Sanction by which he sought to secure the succession of his daughter, Maria Theresa, to his hereditary possessions The suppression of the Ostened Company was a measure of doubtful expediency so far as England was concerned The Ostend Company was more hostile to the French and the Dutch than to English and so its continuance in India would have greatly weakened the commercial

position of the two great rivals of the English Company

During the first quarter of the eighteenth century the Mughal Empire showed unmistakable signs of dissolution The successors of Aurangzeb were weak and dissolute and were at the mercy of their intriguing minister The provinces practically became independent of the control of Delhi The Marathas began to push northwards, occupying the hinterland of British and Portuguese settlement on the west The disorder and confusion attendant upon the failure of the Mughul rule gave the English settlers an opportunity to consolidate their position, though at times they were prejudicially affected by the prevailing misgovernment Of the three Presidencies Bombay suffered most in those troublous times Its trade was hard hit by the depredations of the Maratha sea-captain Kanhji Angria, who preyed upon the shipping of the coast from Bombay to Goa For a time the English at Bombay forgot their old enmity with the Portuguese and made common cause with them in the face of the common danger They also allied themselves with the Sidis of Janjira But in spite of all these the Angrais continued to be a serious menace to their trade till 1766 when their power was broken by the joint efforts of the Peshwa and the English Bombay, however, grew in strength and importance in the "invigorating atmosphere of opposition and became the strongest of the Presidency towns from a military point of view Madras profited much from the long duel for power in the Deccan between the Marathas and Nizamu-ul-Mulk It left English at Madras free to develop their strength unperceived, as neither power had leisure to notice the quite and also strengthening of the Company's settlement The English took particular care to keep on friendly terms with the

Nizam and his vassal, the Nawab of the Carnatic and were thus able to ply a peaceful commerce for a long period But they were seriously alarmed when the Marathas burst into the Carnatic in 1740, killed its Nawab, Dost Ali, in a pitched battle and carried terror all around The storm, however, passed off in 1743 when the Nizam recovered control of the Carnatic and appointed Anwar-ud-din as its Nawab In Bengal the effects of the breakdown of the Mughal rule were felt less by the English settlers than in Bombay and Madras The English in Calcutta lived on good terms with them and drove a thriving trade "The commerce of Bengal, consisting of silks, muslins, saltpetre, sugar, opium, rice, jute and oil, was the most valuable in India" Hence Calcutta developed rapidly, growing in population and prosperity But the English had to live in fear of the ubiquitous Marathas and hastily threw up the well-known "Maratha Ditch" in 1742 when the Marathas invaded Bengal and defeated Nawab Ali Vardi Khan Thus all the Presidency towns of the Company had to feel the effects of the dissolution of the Mughul Empire and of the rise of the Maratha power on its ruins The period of the Company's peaceful commerce was coming to a close

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Society and Culture

The political instability in the country after the death of Aurangzeb had its effect on the, social, religious and economic condition of the people For a long time, there was practically no authority, no administration, no law and no security in vast areas of the country Anarghy was the order of the day The strong prevailed over the weak The Indians had very bad time in every way

Social life in the eighteenth century was marked by stagnation and dependence on the past There was no uniformity of culture and social patterns all over the country People were divided by religion, region, tribe, language and caste The social life of the upper classes was different in many ways from the life of the lower classes There were pronounced social disparities The higher classes and castes were over-conscious of their supremacy and superiority The entire wealth of the country was concentrated in the hands of the higher classes while the masses lacked the barest necessities of life The Muslim concept of equality and fraternity had vanished so completely that a Muslim Sharif could not bear to see a Muslim Radhil trying to come in any way near him in social status The different castes among the Hindus were jealous of their rights and each caste and every group was isolated within its own customs and social traditions Any deviation from established laws and conventions resulted in excommunication The people

were so much absorbed in the celebration of marriages, feasts, festivals and other family ceremonies that they had no urge to create new social values

The social system in the eighteenth century had two aspects One aspect was a grading on he basis of official power and position The second aspect was an ordering based on religion and the traditional divisions of society The first was a reflection of the political system The second comprised the castes and subcastes among the Hindus anti a rigid grading in Muslim society on the basis of Kufr

The Hindu society was divided into four parts, viz , the Brahmans, Kshatriyas, Vaisyas and Sudras The Brahman was the priest, the sole exponent of religion as well as the teacher and guide To quote Craufurd "Their caste is the only repository of the literature that yet remains, to them alone is entrusted the education of youth, they are the sole interpreters of the law and the only expounders of their religion " Both the ignorant and the educated were superstitious and the Brahmans exploited the innate human fear of the unknown The hereditary occupation of the Kshatriyas was to wield temporal power The kings, ministers and soldiers generally belonged to this class The question whether the Kshatriyas were actually doing in this period what they were supposed to do is aptly answered by Nagari Dass, the Hindi poet, who has observed that the Kshatriyas were greedy and selfish They never did any good to anybody and were not compassionate If they saw a beautiful woman in the house of a poor man, their strength of arm lay only in their effort to grab her for themselves The Vaisyas were the community of businessmen They had two broad divisions One branch took to trade and the ether to agriculture It was the former who were typical of their class They were the usurers and the

sole aim of their life was to live on the interest of the money that they gave as loans A Bania was notorious for his love of money He was looked down upon by the society for that reason The Sudras comprised the mass of the people They include the aborigines admitted to the Hindu community Their salvation was supposed to he in the direct and indirect service rendered by them to the three upper classes Below these four castes were the Antyajas with their eight guilds of craftsmen They had to live at a distance from the higher castes and still rendered their services to them The lowest of the low were the Hadis, Doms and Ghandalas

The Brahmanas, Ksharriyas and Vaisyas were all divided and sub-divided into a large number of castes and sub-castes Each caste formed an endogamous group and it was only in this endogamous group that inter-dining was permissible Restrictions on marriage, food and occupation distinguished and defined his social status Any deviation from the customs of a locality was considered to be a in and one who was unity of such an offence was liable to be excommunicated The caste Panchayat did not readmit him in his caste until he humbled himself publicly The marriage had to be in the same caste in order to prevent the intermixture of blood and maintain the purity of descent

In the eighteenth century, the people were very sensitive about the concept of Roti (bread) and Beti (daughter), Inter-dining among the people of different castes was nonexistent Only the Sikhs had their institution of Lungar which was open to all People of different caste could worship the same gods, observe the same manners and customs but would not eat together As a matter of fact, no one could ever think

of it as the threat of excommunication was an effective deterrent

The question of permissible and forbidden food was an important one As a rule, the Brahmans had to abstain from meat and intoxicating liquors The case prescribed different codes for different groups Meat was not a staple diet in India Abstinence from meat was generally practised in the areas dominated by Jain influence The classes that came into contact with them were generally vegetarian, while the others took meat as a luxury and delicacy Vegetarianism and non-vegetarianism was determined not so much by caste as by the religious sect to which an individual belonged The Kshatriyas Rajputs Jats and other lower classes in all ate meat

Occupation was another decisive factor in the formation of caste In spite of the general taboos, social and economic exigencies necessitated contacts between the twice-born and the artisan classes and the creation of relationship between the higher and lower castes Those who practised the professions of barber, weaver, embroiderer, dyer, printer, gardener, potter, ivoryworker etc , were sometimes paid directly for the services rendered by them, More often, their remuneration was a fixed quantity of grain at the harvest time, or some money or clothes on occasions of celebration in the family

There were certain occupations which were open to all Trading, agriculture and even military service could be taken up by anybody who was eligible for it

Caste regulations were strictly enforced by caste councils and Panchayats and caste chiefs through fines, penances (Prayaschitta) and expulsion from the caste Caste was a major division force and an element of disintegration in the India of the eighteenth century

It often split Hindus living, in the same village or region into many social atoms However, it was possible for a person to acquire a higher social, status by the acquisition of high office or power as was done by the Holkar family in the eighteenth century Sometimes, an entire, caste succeeded in raising itself in the caste hierarchy

Family

The family system in the eighteenth century was primarily patriarchal The family was dominated by the senior male member Inheritence was through the male line However, in Kerala, the family was matrilineal Outside Kerala, women were subjected to nearly complete male control They were expected to live as mothers and wives only Women of that time possessed little individuality of their own However, Ahilya Bai administered Indore with great success from 1766 to 1796 Many other Hindu and Muslim women played an important role in the politics of that time

The status of a woman in the family depended entirely on her capacity to give births to sons and hence they were prepared to make any sacrifice for that purpose A mother wielded tremendous influence in all important matters of the household A daughter occupied a peculiar position in the family Although theoretically she was considered Lakshmi (the goddess of prosperity) but her birth was not welcomed She had no share in her father's and brother's property If there were many daughters, they became a galling responsibility

The custom of female infanticide was very much prevalent among the Rajputs and not in all the cases Child marriage was prevalent in society Child marriage was more for social security than as a sign of

backwardness The instability in the eighteenth century created great anxiety among the parents about the honour of their daughters and hence they were married at an early age Women were excluded and the Purdah became an established custom both among the Hindus and Muslims The general in security and lawlessness prevailing at that time made their exclusion more tight and that deprived the women of any opportunity to acquire education Their physical and mental health also suffered The Custom of Sati mostly prevailed in Bengal, Central India and Rajputana In the South, it was uncommon The Peshwas discouraged Sati in their dominion with limited success

Polygamy prevailed among the Kulin families of Uttar Pradesh and Bengal Remarriage of widows was generally looked down upon though it prevailed in some places The Peshwas imposed a tax called Patdam on remarriage of widows The lot of the Hindu widows was usually pitiable There were all sorts of restrictions on their clothing, diet, movements etc They were expected to give up all the pleasure of the earth and serve selflessly the members of her husband's or brother's family Raja Sawai Jai Singh of Amber and the Maratha General Parshuram Bhau tried to promote widow remarriage but failed

Unthouchability was prevalent in society The untouchable were denied certain basic privileges of living They could not use tanks, wells, inns or schools meant for upper class people, not to speak of place of worship or public institutions

The people performed many superstitious rites The upper class Hindus resorted to human sacrifices on certain occasions It was believed that the Goddess Kali requires human blood or heads and for the

gratification of the Devi, a human victim was slaughtered, Self-immolation was another form of human sacrifice In some cases, one, could drown oneself in a river in order to escape a disease In other cases, life could be taken by way of mortification and penance In some cases, one's child was sacrificed Under peculiar conditions, parents took a vow to offer their first-born child to the Ganges Another superstitious rite was self-torture Many devotees pierced their tongues and arms with pointed rods This was done in the belief that good results followed self-torture

Slavery

Slavery prevailed in the country Broadly speaking, slaves could be divided into two parts, domestic slave, and serfs tied to the land The second category of the slaves were transferred with the sale of the land to the buyer In some cases, economic distress, natural calamities, extreme poverty and famines compelled parents to sell their children The Rajputs, the Kshatriyas and Kayasthas usually kept slave women for domestic work, Slaves in India were treated better than the slaves in Europe and America They were usually treated as hereditary servants of the family and were allowed to marry among themselves

The practice of slavery increased with the coming of the Europeans in India, particularly the Portuguese, the Dutch and the English The European Companies purchased slaves in the open market, There were reports of Europeans at Surat, Madras and Calcutta purchasing Abvssinian slaves and employing them for domestic work

Muslim family

In the eighteenth century it became difficult to differentiate between the practices of a Muslim family

and a Hindu family although the Muslims conformed to the Shariat A polygamous household was the fashion among the royalty and the nobility and all those who could afford it The wives, concubines, slave-girl's, dancing and singing girls all had their share in the rich or powerful man's life The individual Muslim, man or woman, was a complete and self-sufficient unit of society Marriage was a civil contract and the family found legal recognition only in connection with inheritance The first wife enjoyed the privileges of seniority She was considered to be the head of the female establishment and she was given percedence over all the other wives However, the children of the subsequent wives enjoyed equal status

The mother in a Muslim family had a status of her own The father was the head of the family but he did not have absolute power in a Muslim family The Muslim woman had the right to give or withhold her consent to marriage, but she could not exercise her right in the eighteenth century In certain cases, a marriage in Islam could be even a temporary contract (Muta), having no higher motive than sexual gratification Due to the influence of Hinduism, divorce in Muslim families was looked down upon and respectable people preferred to put up with all the differences and disputes in the family than to become objects of public discussion by trying to get a divorce One cannot easily find an example among the higher classes to prove the prevalence of divorce in Muslim society Muslim parents had to give dowries to their daughters which were generally beyond, the means of the family The son in a Muslim family was the source of much more pleasure than a daughter 0 account of the patriarchal form of society The reason was mainly economic as the father of girls was considered to be a poor man

Muslim women were kept in seclusion The family dwelling was divided into a Zenanah (woman's quarter) and a Mardanah (man's quarter) Political insecurity might have prompted these measures but in the eighteenth century it was made a point of prestige to have the women of the family concealed in the innermost quarters of the house The seclusion of women, both among the Muslims and Hindus, was mainly confined to the higher classes Women of the lower classes had to appear in public because, they had to work and earn As they had to work like chattels for their menfolk, they could not be kept veiled Those who lived in the countryside had to till the land and carry the produce to the market, while those in the towns had to pay the price of their existence by performing all the household duties and assisting their husbands in any business in which they were engaged

Celibacy did not find any recognition as a virtue in Muslim society Barring the princesses of the royal family and sometime the Still saints, marriage was an obligation to be fulfilled by every Muslim The concept of the prohibited degree in marriage seems to have been obligatory on the Muslims in the eighteenth century Among the orthodox Muslims, there was a prejudice amounting to prohibition in regard to marriages between Sunni Muslims and Shiahs

Islam permitted plurality of wives upto four, but alongwith that it was enjoined that the wives should be treated in a very equitable manner, The number of wives almost determined the social status of a man The leading noblemen kept regular harems while the lower classes were usually monogamous because polygamy was beyond their means

No age limit was fixed for marriage but Muslims

generally favoured early marriages That may be due to the influence of Hinduism Almost as a rule, boys were not allowed to see the girls before they were married, Manucci writes, "Among the Mohammedans, it is the practice not to see their brides beforehand, but to marry upon reports, interests or respect"

The Mehr formed an important part in a Muslim marriage It was usually fixed before the marriage However, in the eighteenth century, in most of the cases, it was more form than reality Mehr could be payable as soon as possible or its payment could be deferred Match-making among Muslims was generally the business of women except when the marriage took place for political reasons There was a class of people whose occupation was to negotiate marriages Though the custom of betrothal was opposed to Shariat, the Muslims were as particular as the Hindus

Occasionally, thee were inter-communal marriages Farrukh-siyar was, married to he daughter of Raja Ajit Singh We do not find any other reference to inter-communal marriage

Education

The educational system of both the Hindus and Muslims was unprogressive and hence both of them were equally backward educationally, Neither of them had any idea of the progress sciences had made in the West They also knew nothing about the new methods of observation, experiment and criticism Although the Europeans dominated the seas around India and made landing stations and factories both on the Western and Eastern coasts, the Indians of Gujarat, Konkan, Kerala, Cholamandal, Orissa and Bengal remained intellectually wholly unaffected by their presence The princes and noblemen of India showed some interest in European animals and birds, mirrors, toys, wives and

spirits, but they showed no interest in their social, economic or cultural' affairs Although almost every branch of knowledge of the Muslim was studied in the Christian universities of Spain, Italy and, France, the new, discoveries of Europe remained almost entirely unknown in India till the end of the eighteenth, century This was not due to the lack of schools in India and there were plenty of them The real trouble was in the quality of education Education was organised on communal basis There were in fact two altogether different systems for the Hindus and Muslims The Hindus used the regional language for elementary education and Sanskrit for higher learning The medium of instruction in both the Hindu and Muslim schools was Persian

The Hindu schools were divided into, two water-tight compartments One section imparted elementary education The schools catered for the needs of those pupils who would follow agricultural and commercial pursuits The teachers largely belonged to the writer castes In Murshidabad, out of 67 teachers in the same number of schools, 39 were Kayasthas, 14 Brahmanas and 14 members of other castes In South Bihar, there were 285 schools and the same number of teachers Out of 'these, 278 were Kayasthas and 7 came from other castes None belonged to the Brahman caste

The pupils in the primary schools spent from five to ten years in completing their course which included elements of reading, writing and arithmetic The aim was to learn letter-writing and composing business correspondence—petitions, grants, leases etc In arithmetic, the main object was to acquire proficiency in accounting, either agricultural or commercial The emphasis was on tables such as multiplication, weights and measures etc Education was purely utilitarian and extremely narrow It did not awaken the mind and

also did not free it from the trammels of tradition Passions and affections were allowed to grow up wild without any thought of pruning their luxuriances or directing their exercise to good purposes

The condition of the higher schools of learning was even worse, In those institutions, both the students and the teachers were Brahmanas because their courses were predominantly theological Three main types of courses were taught, viz , grammar and general literature, law and logic Studies extended from 2 to 12 and even 22 years Most of the schools were in the house of the teacher

The students of law devoted 8 to 23 years in mastering the various branches of Hindu law and rites In Bengal, the treatises of Raghunandan and Jimutavahan were studied Manu and Mitakashara were taught in other schools The study of logic required 12 to 22 years In medicine and astronomy, studies were based on the ancient texts and their commentaries These prolonged studies made the students narrow in their outlook The disciplines of grammar, law and logic were largely formal and verbal

The educational system of the Muslims was, not very much better than that of the Hindus It was intended only for the upper classes and did not offer any instruction to the Muslim masses In all Muslim schools, Persian was the medium of instruction Neither Urdu not any other Indian spoken language was used The Muslim masses were steeped in ignorance

There were three types of instruction for the Muslims The first type consisted of memorising the verses of the Quran without understanding the meaning The second type of instruction was given in

Persian schools It concerned itself mainly with literature, grammar, computation and arithmetic In poetry, Firdausi, Sadi, Hafiz, Urfi, Jami, Ali, Khaqani etc were taught In prose, Gulistan, Waqai Nimat Khan Ali, Bahar-i-Danish etc were taught In epistolary art, Abul Fazl, Alamgir, Madhoram Brahman etc were taught In Grammar and rhetoric, Hadikat-ul-Balaghat, Dastur-ul-Mubtabi etc , were taught Rules of arithmetic and geometry were included in the course

The teaching of rational sciences, including medicine and astronomy, was wholly bookish ' Laboratories and observatories were not available The experimental method was not employed in study 'The main emphasis was on theology and law and the authority of the great teachers of the past was held in great esteem The Muslim mind was soaked in medievalism and it was intellectually quite unprepared to withstand the attack from the West

Centres of higher education in Sanskrit literature were called Chatuspathis or Tols in Bengal and Bihar, Nadia, Kas, Tirhut and Utkala were reputed centres, for Sanskrit education Institutions for higher education in Persian and Arabic were called Madrasahs As Persian was the court language, it was learnt both by the Muslims and the Hindus, Azimabad (Patna) was a great centre of Persian education

Elementary education was widespread Hindu elementary schools were called Pathshalas and those of the Muslims were called Maktabs The schools were not attached to temples or mosques The students were given instruction in the three R's of reading, writing and arithmetic Moral instruction with emphasis an truth, honesty and obedience found a place in the school curriculum Education was mainly popular with

the higher castes Female education received very little attention,

Literature

During the eighteenth century, Urdu spread to all corners of India Urdu literary circles were established in every province of India When the British dominion extended over Northern India, Urdu was employed by polite society of the Muslims and the Hindus

The literature produced during this period was not of high order Its poetry was dilettantish, weighed with euphemism and conceit Its spirit by artificial limitations of rhyme Its mood alternated between the sensuous and the spiritual, neither deeply experienced Clouds of pessimism and despair hung over it It was away from reality The Urdu writers made Urdu a pliant instrument of expression

Both Hindi and Urdu poets of this period were virtuosos They were so much absorbed in their pursuit that they almost lost the awareness of the meaning of life and higher purpose of literature It is worthy of notice that behind the diversities of language, race and creed, a deep cultural unity pervaded the whole of India

Heer Ranjha, the famous romantic epic in Punjabi, was written by Warris Shah For Sindhi literature, the eighteenth century was a period of enormous achievement Shah Abdul Latif composed his famous collection of poems, Risalo, Sachal and Sami were the other great Sindhi poets of the century Daya Ram, one of the great lyricists of Gujarat, wrote during the second half of the eighteenth century Tayaumanavar (1706-44) was one of the best exponents of Sittar poetry in Tamil "In line with other Sittar poets, he protested against the abuse of temple-rule and the caste System

Dr Varadarajan writes about Tamil "The literature of this period is full of frigid conceits and pedantic exercises of the grammarians, and the simplicity, the directness and the restraint chracteristic of the early literature are now lost Most of the poets of this age seem imitative and repetitive not only in their narrative but also in their descriptions Taste in poetry has become sophisticated and poets ire judged by the jingle of their alliteration and the acrobatics of their meter We come across really talented writers capable of original productions but they are only a very few Even the works of these eminent poets evince a childish delight in riotous imaginations and hyperbolic utterances There is, in many works of this period, not so much of art as artificiality, and therefore many of these works have fallen into oblivion "

Dr Sitapati writes about Telugu literature that "good poetry vanished and a period of decadence prevailed " Shri Adya Rangacharya writes that "by the middle of the 18th century, Kannada ceased to exist" In Marathi, Lavanis (erotic poems) became common and even spiritual love and devotion was described in the degraded fashion of carnal love Deshpande observes, "It was obvious that degeneration had set in Metaphysical acumen was getting blunt Devotional urge was on the wane and the verse and vigour of a soldier's life was also, getting lost Literature was settling down to the leisurely luxuriousness and erudite ornateness of the later days of the Peshwas " According to Trivedi, "Life was decadent from 1700 until the advent of the British " Regarding Bengali poetry in the 18th century, Dr S K Banerjee says that it is a colourless dragging in of the old patterns both in subject-matter and form" The predominantly secular tone prevailed in Assamese literature Urdu and Hindi

suffered from similar ills However, during this period appeared a large number of masters of rhetoric, style and diction who possessed supreme authority over language They refined and developed the languages in which they wrote and made them instruments fit to meet the demands of the future Their literary output indicates the cultural unity of India

It was during the 18th century that the Christian missionaries set up printing, presses in India and brought out vernacular editions of the Bible Ziegenbelg, a Danish missionary, composed a Tamil grammar and published a Tamil version of the Bible The missionaries also compiled a Tamil dictionary The Baptist missionaries like Carey, Ward and Marshman set up a printing press at Serampur and published a Bengali version of the Bible

Art

As there was a lack of patronage at Delhi, the artists migrated to the slate capitals like Hyderabad, Lucknow, Murshidabad, Jaipur etc In 1784, Asaf-ud-Daula built the great Imambara It has no pillars or supports The view of Percy Brown is that it is a work of outward show and tawdry pretence whose style has no spiritual values The palace of Suraj Mal at Dig, the capital of Bharatpur, was planned to rival the imperial palaces at Agra Work an its construction was started in 1725 but the construction was left unfinished Many painters of the Mughal school migrated to Hyderabad, Lucknow, Kashmir and Patna and flourished there New schools of painting also achieved distinction The paintings of Kangra and Rajput schools revealed new vitality and taste Music continued to develop and flourish in the 18th century, particularly in the reign of Muhammad Shah

Throughout the 18th century India remained far

behind the Western countries in the spheres of science and technology The Indian rulers of the 18th century did not show any interest in the developments in science and technology in the West except in weapons of war and techniques of military training, India had to pay very heavily for this weakness

Religious condition

The Hindus believed in the trinity of Brahma, Vishnu and Mahesh—the three major powers of creation, sustenance and destruction The worship of Brahma was not popular because fie was alleged to have been cursed by god on account of some sin

Siva and Vishnu, alongwith their female counterparts—Parvati and Lakshmi—claimed the devotion of almost entire Hindu society Their worship represented three distinct forms of belief and practice, The followers of Siva were called Shaivites The followers of Vishnu were called Vaishnavites The people who worshipped the female counterpart (Sakti) of Lord Siva were called Saktas However, these divisions did not make any difference in the basic concepts of Hinduism

The worship of Siva was generally the religion of the common people His ritual could be performed without a priest He appeared to be more terrible than benevolent and consequently more feared and revered than loved His third eye could rain fire on the, people who neglected him He was the patron of craftsmen, cartwrights, smiths, potters, hunters and washermen He was also the head of the armies, the god of the fighters in any mode of warfare His name, Har Har Mahadev, was a war-cry Thieves and free-booters were devoted to him The beggars and Faqirs showed their affinity with him by wearing long and matted hair or by shaving their heads dean He was

omnipotent but he was supposed to live on high mountains, dense forests and solitary places The Rajputs were predominantly the followers of Siva They built temples dedicated to Siva even outside Rajasthan—Gujarat and Bundelkhand The image of Siva in the form of Lingam was carved out of stone and water was poured over it to give bath to the god

Vishnu was the ideal god for the householder He was the god recommended to him by the priestly class The ascendancy of Vishnu over the other gods is shown by a painting of the Rajasthani school dated 1740 A D Vishnu is seated on a throne in heaven with Lakshmi on his knee He is attended by the other gods, among whom Siva appears on the right as an ascetic alongwith Ganesh On the left are seen Indra and Brahma with his four heads It was both fashionable and respectable to be a devotee of Vishnu His image was a complete image of a well-formed human being

Both Siva and Vishnu held very prominent positions in the religious thought of the Hindus It was not necessary to be either a follower of Siva or Vishnu Harihara was the god representing both of them Hari was the name of Vishnu and Hara of Siva They could both be worshipped in this combined form

The third important sect of the Hindus was the Saktas They believed that the gods had relegated their more onerous and troublesome executive functions to their female counterparts In difficult circumstances, the worshippers turned to the goddesses with greater devotion than to the gods Mahadevi, the great goddess, was worshipped under a thousand designations and invested in an infinite variety of forms

The religion of Devi and her designations were much more prevalent in the Eastern provinces of

Northern India Their worship was fairly widespread The worship of the Vam Marg comprised the use of wine, meat, fish, various postures of the body and sexual intercourse Their shrines could be the centres for bloody sacrifices and sensual obscenities

All over Northern India, the goddesses were worshipped as the Great Mothers These goddesses were sometimes very gracious and bounteous like Gauri whom the young girls worshipped in the hope of getting good husbands and a happy married life

The Rajputs took their inspiration and courage from Shakti, Durga, Bhawani who had their shrines all over Rajasthan where the rulers were generally the followers of Siva She was addressed by such names as Mahamaya, Kali Mata, Chamunda, Sakrai, Rai Mata, Naguechian, Sitala Mata, Karniji etc

In addition to Siva, Vishnu and the female personifications of divine power, the Hindus also worshipped Ganesa or Ganpati as god of luck and good fortune and the Sun This five-fold reverence was called Panchayatan Puja and was the most popular form of worship Ganesa was believed to be the remover of all evil and was worshipped everywhere at the beginning of all auspicious ceremonies In Rajasthan Ganesa was called Vinayak

The worship of Surya or the Sun was also prevalent in the 18th century The Sun being a very potent factor in their life, Sun worship was in the blood of the Hindu people Every morning the Sun was saluted and offered water in the form of Arghya by the householders who prayed for his liberation in the event of an eclipse The famous Gayatri Mantra was the invocation of the Sun god for bestowing his glorious brightness to sharpen the intellect of his worshippers

The worship of nature had a very strong hold over the pastoral and agricultural people They had always to go through the extremities of weather and were very susceptible to the effects of heat, cold, rain or drought

The rivers, Ganga and Jamuna, were revered as the Great Mothers Their entire course in the plains was dotted with holy cities Tree worship was very common Pipal was regarded as the Brahman among trees Tulsi plant was held very sacred by the Hindus Spirit worship was another major element in Hindu belief

Separate religious communities were organised and consolidated within the pale of Saivism and Vaishnavism by particular teachers in order to restrict and ensure the entire devotion of the individual for either Siva or Vishnu The most prominent Saiva sect was that of the Jogis They professed Vedantism with Jangamas They practised severe austerities and physical mortifications like their god The most important order of the Jogis was that of the Kanphatas or slit ears The Jogis, were a common and prominent feature of society They did not stick to one place but kept on roaming all over the area They enjoyed great prestige and honour Another class of the Jogis shaved all their hair and were called Mundiyas The other sects were Gosains, Sannyasis, Dandins, with their ten branches Some of them practised the most revolting rites Many sold charms Some became astrologers, jugglers or minstrels and some practised uncantations and exorcisms

Garibdas (1717-1778), a Jat was saint-cum-householders, Keshavdas belonged to the same order Ram Charan who was born in 1718 founded the sect of Ram Sanehis This order consisted exclusively of Sadhus The sect of Sivanarayanis was founded by Shiv Narayan in the year 1734

The Muslims

The beliefs and practices of the Muslims in the 18th century were influenced by three main factors viz , the decline of the Mughal Empire, the wide prevalence of the doctrine of Wahdat-ul-Wujud (Unity of Existence or Immanence) and the influence of Hinduism The Muslim state was supposed to be Islamic state and Muslim rulers were responsible for the maintenance of the Shariat However, his responsibility was hypothetical The Muslims of the 18th century had neither the wish nor the power to follow the Shariat

The doctrine of Wahdat-ul-Wujud encouraged an attitude of indifference towards moral laxity although its main aim was to establish a kind of positive tolerance of the beliefs and practices of non-Muslims, on the pround that God is immanent in His creation and Muslims and non-Muslims Islam and other religions, are all one

There was opposition to the doctrine of Wahdat-ul-Wujud Shaikh Ahmed of Sirhind declared that those who believed in Wahdat-ul-Wujud were evading or undermining the Shariat, the concept of which was higher and could be realised through spiritual awareness of the unity of phenomena Shah Walliullah (1703-1763) brought about the intellectual reconciliation of the two doctrines through his own spiritual experience According to him, the two doctrines were the different stages on the road to spiritual knowledge Shah Waliullah was also a religious reformer He tried hard to bring Islam to the masses of India by translating the Quran into Persian

The orthodox Muslims were involved in acute sectarianism The party system at the Mughal court was strongly influenced by Shiah-Sunni differences Mirza Mazhar Jani-Janan (1702-81), a leading

religious and social personality, was murdered by the Shias as they suspected him of having made derogatory remarks about Tadhiahs

Goga

The old make worship seems to have taken the form of veneration for Goga who was called a Chauhan by the Rajputs and a Pir by the Muslims There was also the worship of Khwaja Khizr the god of water

There are references to certain sects in the 18th century The Bisnois performed the Namaz five times a day with their faces, towards the East They repeated the names of God and all the angels and prophets Allah, Michael, Israel, Jibraeel, Muba-mmadaeel etc , and buried their dead Whenever they uttered the name of Vishnu, they had to say Bismillah also Untouchability was very common and they did not cat with one who did not belong to their fraternity

Hussaini Brahmans claimed a mythical relationship with Imam Hussain They accepted gifts and charity only from the Muslims and not from the Hindus The Shanwis followed the religious practices of both the Hindus and Muslims and abstained from eating beef and pork They danced before the idol of Kalka and listened to Arri in Mathura and Brindaban The sect of Sivanarayanis was popular with the Muslim The cult of Mian Bibi found favour both with Hindus and Muslims equally although Mian Bibi was a deity of the female sex alone Shah Daulah's, mausoleum attracted people The worship of Panjpir (five saints) was very common in the Punjab and adjacent areas

The people in general believed in the power of amulets and charms for healing the sick, catching the thieves, casting out devils, establishing friendship

between two persons, curing barrenness, ensuring the birth of male children and identifying thieves etc Charms were solicited from holy men People's faith in astrology led to dependence on astrologer The people consulted astrologers before undertaking a voyage, proposed purchase of a slave, the first wearing of clothes etc There were lucky numbers and unlucky numbers 13 was generally considered to be unlucky The odd numbers were considered to be lucky The number 52 was one of the Hindu favourite numbers No 5 was considered sacred

The people believed in acts of charity which carried special healing powers, It was common to release prisoners when a king ascended the throne or any member of the royal family was sick

The people believed in fasts of varying rigour and duration The Nirjala Ekadasi was a rigorous fast as the devotee was not to take even a sip of water The Janmashtmi fast was also popular It was connected with the birth of Lord Krishna Nagapanchmi was a day of fasting in honour of the Nagas Shivaratri was observed in honour of Siva It was a day of strict fasting and vigil The full moon inspired the people to observe fast and worship Sat Narayan, that is, Vishnu Malpunya was held on the full moon in September Karttika Purnima fell on the full moon of Karttika (October-November) It was a fast in honour of Siva's victory over the demon called Tripurasura Shraddhs were the days when the manes were propitiated by feeding the Brahmanas Women fasted in the Navaratri which fell in March/April and September/ October, Devi was worshipped and propitiated by sowing barley in small earthen vessels, The people also celebrated Durgashtmi and Ram Naumi They also celebrated Makar Sankranti and Karak Sankranti

The people also celebrated Rakshabandhan, Bhaiduj, Teej etc Holi was a very popular festival It was celebrated best in Mathura and Brindaban It was celebrated both by the Hindus and the Muslim Dussehra and Diwali were also celebrated by the Hindus

Islam being a puritanical religion, the Muslims had very few festivals Id-ul-Azha or Id-i-Qurban was the most important festival Id-ul-Fiter was celebrated after the fasts of the month of Ramzan It was celebrated for three days with great festivities, fire-works and banqueting, Nauroz was the Persian New Year day On that date, the king received many presents from the nobles Muharram was celebrated mainly by the Shias Shab-i-Barat was a Muslim festival Houses were illuminated alongwith great display of fireworks

Economic condition

India of the 18th century was a land of contrasts Extreme poverty existed side, by side with extreme riches and luxury While the nobles were rich and powerful and steeped in luxury and comfort, the peasants were oppressed and impoverished The increasing revenue demands of the state, oppression of officials, greed and rapacity of the nobles, revenue farmers and Zamirdars, marches and counter-marches of the rival armies and the destruction brought about by foreign invaders made the life of the people wretched Many prosperous cities which were the centres of flourishing industry, were sacked and devastated Delhi and Mathura were plundered by Ahmed Shah Abdali Agra was plundered by the Jats Surat and other cities of Gujarat and the Deccan were plundered by the Maratha chiefs Sarhind was plundered by the Sikhs On account of the

disintegration of the Mughal Empire in the 18th century, there was practically no law and order and hence there could be no manufactures or trade It is pointed out that by the dose of the 18th century, the urban centres had become a "dead place"

V P S Raghuvanshi writes, "Civilised life cannot flourish amid conditions of insecurity and oppression In the 18th century, the break-up of the Mughal monarchy released forces of political disintegration and Anarchical conditions which destroyed the creative and cooperative spirit of man They caused deterioration in every phase of national life The regions which suffered most from the ravages of the soldiery became the scenes of uprooted humanity and epidemics The period glorified war, bred anarchy and held civilisation in terror"

Ghulam Hussain, a historian of Bengal, calls the 18th century as "an age of senseless, slothful princes and of grandees, ignorant and meddling" He further writes, "It is in consequence of such wretched administration that every part of Hind has gone to ruin and every one of its discouraged urban inhabitants have broken their hearts Life itself has become disgustful to most So that, on comparing the present times with the past, one is apt to think that the world is overspread with blindness and that the earth is totally overwhelmed with an everlasting darkness"

In the 18th century, wars, invasions and other calamities wrought havoc and cities like Lahore, Delhi, Agra and Mathura in the North and large tracts of the country in the Deccan were destroyed However, this adversity was compensated to some extent by the appearance of European merchants on the coasts of India They purchased Indian goods in return for gold

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materials and advance wages were given in return for finished goods The finished articles were usually collected and placed in the market by middleman, Sometimes the nobles held direct dealings with the artisans

The Indian village was a self-sufficient economic unit The agricultural surplus went to the king in the form of land revenue and the peasant after meeting the Government demand, had little surplus left with him for purchasing the goods of the urban industry The stream of exchange of goods between the village and the town was thin Lack of capital, rigidity of caste restrictions and the meagreness of trade between the village and the town, were the factors which prevented the development of the traditional business classes engaged in trade and banking into a strong and well-knit middle class of the European type

The tradesmen, bankers and moneylenders constituted the Indian mercantile community They utilised their income in giving loans to the members of the ruling class However, they lacked the spirit of enterprise

Pyrard has written about the greatness and originality of Indian industry and culture To quote him, "I have never seen men of wit so fine and polished as are these Indians, they have nothing barbarous and savage about them, as we am apt to suppose " Again, "No people in the world know so much about pearls and precious stones, and even at Goa, the goldsmiths, lapidaries and other workmen occupied with the finer crafts, are all banias and Bramenis (Brahmans) of Cambay and have their own streets and shops "

Merchant ships in the port towns and boats playing on the country's rivers were all manufactured

in the country There was a flourishing boat building industry at Dacca, Allahabad, Lahore Thatta, Masaulipatam Pulicat, Calicut, Surat, Bassein and Goa In the art of ship-building, India was ahead of European nations Parkinson writes In shipbuilding, they probably taught the English far more than they learnt from them " The important shipbuilding centres were Goa, Bassein, Surat, Masulipatam, Satgaon, Dacca and Chittagong

The important centres of textile industry were Dacca and Murshidabad in Bengal, Patna in Bihar, Surat, Ahmedabad and Broach in Gujarat, Chanderi in Madhya, Pradesh, Burhanpur in Maharashtra, Jaunpur, Varanasi, Lucknow and Agra in Uttar Pradesh, Multan and Lahore in the Punjab, Masulipatam, Aurangabad, Chicacole and Vishakha-patnam in Andhra Pradesh, Bangalore in Mysore (Karnataka) and Coimbatore and Madurai in Madras, Kashmir was a centre of woollen manufactures

Indian was self-contained and generally, self-sufficient in agricultural and industrial goods required for the consumption of her population The imported materials included raw silk, ivory, coral, tortoise-shell and amber in addition to metals

Indian industries not only met the home demand but also exported their goods Indian industries catered for foreign markets also India continued to be a sink of precious metals, Van Twist writes, "Although there Were no gold or silver mines in India, large quantities of both were imported from foreign countries, and it was forbidden to export them " Similar views are expressed by Hawkins and Terry

For centuries, India was known for the excellence of her cotton products There was a large consumption of Indian manufactures in Rome in ancient times The

principal riches of India consisted chiefly of silk and cotton stuffs Their great popularity was based upon the excellence of craftsmanship

Among other articles of export, indigo was of importance Limited quantities of iron and steel were exported from Masulipatam Cotton yarn was exported from the Coromandel coast, Gujarat exported precious stones, marble, drugs, opium, Hing etc

The trade and industry of India was organised and financed by Indian merchants, They were not confined to port towns but were spread in all cities and towns all along the trade routes of the country Multan in the Punjab and the three Sing towns of Bukkur, Sukkur and Rohri were centres of inland trade in the North-West. They had a flourishing community of merchants comprising mostly of Khattris, Lohanas and Bhatias Lahore, Delhi and Agra were also great centres of Commercial activity in Northern India Malda, Rangpur and Kasimbazar were important trade centres in Bengal In Rajasthan, Ajmer, Jodhpur, Pali and Jaisalmer were old centres, Ahmedabad in Gujarat and Poona and Nagpur in the Maratha country rose In importance after 170 Hyderabad, Bangalore and Tanjore were flourishing centres of trade and commerce

In addition to the merchants, there was a class of financiers, both big and small The Jagat Seths of Bengal, the Nathjis of Gujarat and the Chettis of the South were famous financiers The Jagat Seths possessed a capital of 16 crores of rupees in the first half of the 18th century During their first invasion of Bengal, the Marathas carried away from their Kothi two crores of Arcot rupees but even that loss did not affect their resources appreciably The Nathjis in Surat had similarly vast resources The single family of

Nathu Kothari Chettis monopolised business and was regarded the richest Their business extended to Burma, Malaya and the Eastern Islands The Chettis acted as bankers and supplied the British merchants with cash for their bills of exchange on Madras, Bombay and Calcutta They had regular agencies in the Presidencies The big bankers performed all the functions of a modern bank viz , receiving deposits, giving loans and issuing Hindus There were small bankers who gave loans to artisans and other, producers Every village had, its' own moneylender who advanced loans for agricultural operations and also to meet their other requirements If the resources of all the bankers, financiers and moneylenders in India in the 18th century are taken into account, the aggregate capital resources of the country were substantial, though they were scattered

The view of Dr Tara Chand is that the peasant in the 18th century was better off than his successor in the 19th century, This was so not only in respect of the larger size of his holding, but also because the average productivity of land was higher at that time

The most important item of agricultural produce was foodgrains In the Deccan, wheat and gram, rice and millet were the crops grown Khafi Khan states that Jowar and Bajra were the main support of the people of the Deccan and were extensively grown In the North also, millets supplied the major part of the articles of food of people and formed the principal crop Wheat was not an important crop in Uttar Pradesh at that time Next to foodgrains, cotton and sugar were the most widely grown crops Tobacco, opium and indigo were the other commercial crops

The country was not free from the danger of famines Not less than 24 famines and deaths occurred

over a period of 200 years from 1595 to 1792 Famines in those days were caused by the non-availability of food in the affected area although there may be surplus in some other parts of the country This was partly due to the lack of efficient means of transport at that time

There were wide variations of prices of foodgrains Generally, foodgrains were cheaper in Bengal than in Northern India, Those were cheaper in Northern India than in Gujarat The prices of commodities of daily consumption were very low

The prices in India showed two types of fluctuations viz , regional md periodical The former was the result of the difficulties and heavy cost of transport of bulky agricultural produce from one place to another

Every region and even every village tried to be self-sufficient in food supply If the rains were deficient and crops failed, he could not supplement his stock from outside except at ruinous prices The margin of fluctuations in prices in the same locality from year to year was very wide

The price level was a matter of great importance to the wage earners In the 18th century in India, wage labour was exclusively an urban phenomenon In the villages, the menials, and the agricultural labourers and artisans were remunerated for their work by giving them' a share in the produce of the farm on which they worked Money 'wages were paid to ordinary and skilled labourers employed in the town By the middle of the 18th century, the prevailing rate of daily wages in Calcutta was six pice for ordinary labourers and ten pice for skilled workers

European travellers and other contemporary

writers have mentioned the poverty of the Indian masses Their view was based on the scantiness of clothing, miserable dwellings, poor utensils and lack of furniture and not the lack of adequate quantities of nourishing diet Fitch writes that in Northern India, the people go all naked save a little cloth bound about their middle In the winter, the men wear quilted gowns of cotton and quilted caps with a slit to look out at and so tied down beneath their ears As far as the poor classes of the people were concerned, they had few wants and those were met adequately from what the country produced There was no general starvation or inadequate nourishment except in periods of famine They did not have any surplus even in normal years to accumulate and build up economic reserves for meeting calamities like famines Their clothing was scanty and their dwellings poor, but in respect of those necessaries they probably did not feel the want of more than they had and they hardly ever made an effort to improve their lot We was simple and contented and the simple and few wants were easily me so that the struggle for existence was not hard Their simplicity and contentment had its own advantages but it, had one great drawback also The common people did not feel the urge for improvement and hence did not struggle for economic progress

The princes, nobles and the provincial chiefs lived in grand style and in great luxury Mughal nobility has been described as nothing but voluptuousness and wealth confusedly intermingled A lot of money was spent on delicacies like costly imported fruit, on servants and retainers, on houses and elephants, on marriages and dowries and on building fort-like houses A large part of the income was spent on jewellery, costly dresses and horses and elephants Each noble kept hundreds of servants for his stables

and his household A large sum of money was spent on making presents to the king The law of escheat required that all the accumulated wealth of a noble after his death would go to the royal treasury The result was that there was no incentive to save and hence the nobles spent all that they had and something more They were mostly tinder debt, tinder the circumstances, there was no accumulation of capital There was no opportunity for profitable investment of savings, The result was that even if some nobles accumulated large fortunes, they spent them in marriages, dowries and buildings rather than in investment in business or industry

While discussing the economic condition of the people in the 18th century, a reference may be made to what was done by the English East India Company in India in the second half of the 18th century' The servants of the English Company penetrated into all parts of the country and compelled the handicraftsmen to deal exclusively with them The prices of the monopolised goods were arbitrarily fixed by the officials and the producers were fleeced mercilessly The weavers were compelled to enter into engagements to work for the English Company and for a breach of the contract, they were punished with fine, imprisonment, flogging etc Even the highest officials of the Company were engaged in private trade which brought them huge sums, of money Even the Directors of the English Company admitted that the vast fortunes acquired in the inland made have been obtained by a scene of the most tyrannical and oppressive conduct that was ever known in any age or country Vansittart tells us that the English compelled the natives to buy or sell at just what rates they pleased on pain of flogging or confinement It was estimated that between 1757 and 1766, the English

East India Company and its employees received £ 6 millions from Indians as gifts Clive himself was guilty of this offence Trade monopolies, political corruption and exorbitant land taxes enabled the English Company to transfer large sums of money annually to Great Britain There was a regular drain of wealth from India to Great Britain Sir John Shore wrote in 1797 "The Company are merchants as well as sovereigns of the country, in the former capacity, they engross its trade, whilst in the latter they appropriate the revenues The remittances to Europe of revenues are made in the commodities of the country which are purchased by them Whatever allowance we way make for the increased industry of the subjects of the state, owing to the enhanced demand for the produce of it, there is reason to conclude that the benefits are more than counter-balanced by evils inseparable from the system of a remote foreign dominion " Lord Cornwallis wrote in 1790, "The consequence of the heavy drain of wealth from the above causes with the addition of that which has been occasioned by the remittances of private fortunes, having been for many years past and are now severely felt, by the great diminution of the current specie and by the langour which has thereby been thrown upon the cultivation and the general commerce of the country "

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Advent of Europeans

The coming of the Europeans to India was an event of very great importance in the history of our country as it ultimately led to revolutionary changes in her destiny in the future and the Portuguese were the first in this field Indian commodities were in great demand in European markets throughout the Middle Ages These things used to reach Europe either completely by land or party by land and partly by sea However, difficulties began to arise on account of the rise to power of the Turks As the land route was practically dosed, there arose the necessity of finding a new route to India

The Portuguese led the way in this matter Prince Henry of Portugal (1393-1460), who is commonly known as the "Navigator", did a lot in this field He set up a regular school for the training of seamen on scientific lines He patronized all those who took up work of navigation The result of the efforts of the Portuguese was that practically the whole of the coast-line of Africa came to be known to the Portuguese They crossed the Equator in 1471 and reached the Congo river in 1481

In 1487, Bartholomew Diaz was carried by storms past the Cape of Good Hope He was patronized by King John II In 1497, Vasco da Gama started on his expedition under the patronage of King Emmanuel To begin with, he covered the whole of the route which

had been followed by Diaz and crossed the Cape of Good Hope He readied Mozambique He got help of an Indian pilot and set sail for India in April 1498 After a voyage of a month, he reached Calicut He was cordially received by King Zamorin who gave him certain privileges also

The arrival of Vasco da Gama on the Indian scene was not liked at ail by the Arabs They started rumours of many kinds against the Portuguese Finding the situation hard, Vasco da Gama left India after a stay of about three, months

According to Dodwell, "In four respects the Portuguese were singularly fortunate Arriving on the Malabar Coast, they found themselves in touch with a multitude of small princes divided by mutual jealousy, so that hostility in one was certain to be accompanied by friendship in another Furthermore, the country round Cochin and Calicut did not at that time produce enough rice for the needs of the inhabitants, who were supplied by Muslim vessels with grain from the Coromandel Coast, the region was, therefore, peculiarly sensitive to a blockade by sea Again, reaching India at the close of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese found no State which could make either great or sustained efforts to prevent their establishment And lastly the difficulties which they had to meet and overcome implied that for purposes of war their vessels would be stouter and more formidable than any ships they would meet in Indian Aurangzeb's zeal for Islam weakened the foundations of his multi-religious imperial structure The attempt to annex Marwar was a grave mistake It led to a long and costly war in Rajasthan It alienated the Rajputs whose political and military support had played a vital role in the consolidation and maintenance of Mughal power for a century

The Deccan war of Aurangzeb contributed substantially to the decline of the Mughal Empire That endless war exhausted the treasury The Government became bankrupt The soldiers, starving from, arrears of pay, mutinied The Maratha country became, "devoid of trees and bare of crops, their place being taken by the bones of men and beasts " In two years (1702-4), plague and famine took a toll of over two million souls The Deccan war affected the administration and economy of North India Aurangzeb's long absence from his capital weakened the Central Government in its relations with the provinces The provincial Governors (Subahdars), largely free from his supervision and control, ceased to have respect or fear for imperial authority The administrative machinery in the provinces was weakened because their best soldiers, highest officers and all their collected revenues were sent to the Deccan ' The older and more settled, peaceful and prosperous provinces in the North were left, to be governed by 'minor officers with small contingents and incomes quite inadequate for maintaining central authority All classes of lawless men began to raise their heads Desultory war ruined large parts of Rajasthan Some Rajput Zamindars created disturbances in Malwa The plundering Maratha bands penetrated into Malwa and Gujarat The Jats carried on raids in the Agra region The Sikhs fought against the Mughals and the hill Rajas in the Punjab In Bengal, there were hostilities between the English traders and the Mughal officers In his exile in the Deccan, Aurangzeb lost his grip over the administration of those provinces which formed the backbone of the Mughal Empire

A large portion of the income of the Mughal state was spent on the army on account of constant warfare

The number of Mansabdars rose from 8000 under Shah Jahan to 14,449 under Aurangzeb The army bill of Aurangzeb was roughly double of that of Shah Jahan Out of 14,449 Mansabdars under Aurangzeb, about 7000 were paid through Jagirs and 7450 were paid in cash, The Mansabdari system reached a crisis as a result of the enormous increase in the number of the Mansabdars who had to be paid through Jagirs As the number of Jagirs was not adequate, many Mansabdars had to wait for some time before they could get Jagirs Even when Jagirs were available in the Deccan, the Government could not always ensure security of tenure because those were often exposed to the risk of sudden occupation by the Marathas Constant military operations in the Deccan and disturbances and lawlessness in the, North Indian provinces, reduced cultivation in, both regions, and the peasants were not able to pay their full dues to the Jagirdars The uncertainty about the income from their Jagirs weakened the numerical strength of the army Large-scale corruption crept into the Mansabdari system and sapped the foundations of the Mughal military power

War, disorder and official exactions injured trade and industry Trade almost ceased in the Deccan The Maratha raiders made it almost impossible for caravans to travel North of the Narmada without strong escorts

The Mughal nobles who were the pillars of the Empire, succumbed to the fatal vice of love of ease and luxury and became "pale persons in muslin petticoats" Immigration from Persia and Central Asia almost came to a stop Alienated by Aurangzeb's policy of suspicion and hostility, the Rajputs were reluctant to serve the Mughal Empire Moreover, Rajput society no longer produced warrior-statesmen like Man Singh and

Raja Jai Singh High-spirited, talented and energetic officers, found themselves checked, discouraged and driven to sullen inactivity Aurangzeb, in his later years, could bear no contradiction, could hear no unpalatable truth, but surrounded himself with smooth-tongued and pompous passively registering his edicts Such nobles could not carry the burden of a great Empire The only survivor of the old nobility in the last years of Aurangzeb's reign was Asad Khan about within Aurangzeb said, "There is not, nor will there ever be, any Wazir better than Asad Khan "

There was inefficiency in the Mughal army It was composed of diverse racial elements and religious groups such as Turks, Afghans, Rajputs and Hindustanis It was a mercenary force The real allegiance of the troops was not to the imperial throne but to the persons in immediate command. If a prince, or a Mansabdar or a tributary chief rebelled against the Mughal monarch he usually carried his troops with him The infantry was practically useless There was no naval wing The proportion of officers to men on active service was very low The Mughal army moved like an unwieldy city and was incapable of swift action or brilliant adventure The camp-followers were more than the combatants Luxuries of camp life demoralised the nobles who were the leaders of the army Ease-loving commanders could not maintain a high standard of discipline among the troops There was no commissariat service Each man had to make his own arrangement for transport Supplies were provided by large Bazars marching with the army. Antiquated weapons were used and antiquated methods of warfare were followed Aurangzeb made no attempt to improve the Mughal army except that he doubled the number of Mansabdars and added to the number of troops

At the end of Aurangzeb's reign, the Mughal Empire was in a state of hopeless decay, administration, culture, economic life, military strength and social organisation—all seemed to be hastening to utter ruin and dissolution"

Successors of Aurangzeb

Bahadur Shah I (1707-12)

In the closing years of his life, Aurangzeb was perturbed by, the gloomy prospects of a bloody war among his sons Therefore, he attempted an equitable distribution of the Empire among his sons He intended that his eldest son Muazzam should receive 12 Subahs with his capital at Delhi Mohammad Azam should have Agra, the Subahs of the Deccan, Malwa and Gujarat His youngest son Kam Baksh was to have the provinces of Bijapur and Hyderabad Though the will of Aurangzeb is considered to be of doubtful veracity, the presence of Muazzam in Kabul, deputation of Kam Baksh by his father, to Bijapur and that of, Mohammad Azam to Malwa, lend support to the presumption that Aurangzeb did not want his sons to fight among themselves after his death

The Portuguese were not satisfied with merely a share in the trade They were determined to control the same This they were able to accomplish by setting up a strong navy which helped them to command the seas They also built fortresses to guard the narrow waters They set up a central establishment from which operations could be directed on which the navy could be based

As regards the methods adopted by the Portuguese to control the trade Some routes, and some commodities on all routes, were monopolised for the benefit of the Kingdom of Portugal Subject to these restrictions Indian or other ships could obtain

licences to ply between specified ports on payment of substantial fees An unlicensed vessel was liable to be captured and confiscated The gun boats employed by the Portuguese to patrol the routes were more than a match for the cumbrous ships of their rivals By these methods, the Portuguese controlled the main trade routes throughout the sixteenth century It is true that some goods continued to reach Europe over land, but that was due mainly to the increasing corruption of the Portuguese officials who looked upon their posts as a source of private gain and could he bribed to allow the contraband goods to pass

The possessions of the Portuguese on the west coast of India were an integral part of the kingdom of Portugal, However, settlements of less regular type cropped up on the east coast of India At various places in Bengal and on the Coromandel Coast, Portuguese merchants settled with the consent of the local rulers, However, relying on the prestige of their nation, they fortified their settlements, assumed right of self-government and eventually in some cases repudiated the authority of the Portuguese Viceroy at Goa Thus Portuguese settlements became centres of lawlessness and in some cases nests of pirates

The immediate effects produced by the Portuguese in India were not great In the field of politics, their capture of Goa involved them in enmity with Bijapur On the whole, they maintained friendly relations with Vijayanagar, but they did not render any material help to her in her struggle against the Muslims From the point of view of the Indians, the appearance of the Portuguese merely added one more element in the confused politics of the time In war, they introduced higher standards of efficiency in artillery and musketry They created a legend of invincibility which immensely helped them in their work

So far as commerce was Concerned, ıt cannot be saıd that the dıversıon of trade was accompanıed by any great expansıon ın the exports of Indıan goods It ıs Probable that more pepper reached Western Europe than before However, the only new development was the openıng of new markets for Indıan cotton goods ın Western Afrıca and Brazıl The Portuguese were not successful ın developıng the ımport trade The great bulk of theır purchases were paıd for ın sılver They could sell lıttle except luxurıes and curıosıtıes from Europe The ımportant servıce whıch they rendered to Indıa was the effectıve polıcıng of the coastal trade There were nests of pırates along the Malabar Coast who lıved maınly by attacks on the small vessels whıch plıed ın great numbers between Gujarat on the one sıde and Ceylon, Madras and Bengal on the other The Portuguese provıded gun-boats to convoy the fleets of these vessels and thereby establıshed a reasonable degree of securıty on the maın lıne of Indıan trade However, we must not forget the toll whether ın lıcence fees or ın brıbes, whıch they levıed on Indıan commerce, both coastal and foreıgn

From the begınnıng of the 17th century, the power of the Portuguese began to declıne Thıs was partıcularly due to the fact that ın 1580 Portugal was made a part and parcel of Spaın ın the tıme of Phılıp II of Spaın Spaın herself was not doıng well at that tıme She could hardly be expected to defend the ınterests of the Portuguese The result was that one by one the Portuguese lost many of theır possessıons They were turned out from Amboyna by the Dutch In 1662, Ormuz was snatched away by the Government of Iran The Dutch got Malacca ın 1640 They were also turned out Ceylon ıt 1656 In, 1739, the Marathas got Basseın

Causes of faılure of Portuıguese empıre ın Indıa

Many causes were responsible for the failure of the Portuguese empire in India

(1) After the death of Albuquerque, no strong person was sent by the Portuguese Government to India The result was that the Portuguese empire be an to disintegrate

(2) The Portuguese administration in India was corrupt The salaries of the official were low and consequently they felt no hesitation in accepting bribes from any quarter The bulk of the Portuguese officials were selfish Unmindful of the sufferings of the people, they were bent upon making fortunes for themselves The means did not matter to them

(3) The religious policy of the Portuguese was also responsible for their ruin The Portuguese introduced the Inquisition into India and they committed atrocities oil those who were not Christians They used all kinds of methods for the conversion of the people of India to Christianity

The Sikhs

Bahadur Shah had to deal with the Sikhs in the Punjab Under the leadership of Gobind Singh, the Sikhs had carried a fierce struggle against Aurangzeb, but after his death, Bahadur Shah became friendly with the Sikh Guru The Guru met Bahadur Shah at Agra and was received with honours due to him He was successfully persuaded to accompany the Mughal army to the Deccan On reaching Nander, the Guru separated himself from the Emperor and decided to pass the rest of his life there. However, he was murdered on 17 November 1708 Banda Bahadur assumed the military leadership of the Sikhs at that stage He collected thousands of Sikhs from various

parts of the Punjab to fight against the Muslims and captured Kaithal, Samana, Shahabad, Ambala, Kapuri and Sadhura His greatest victory was against Wazir Khan, Governor of Sirhind whom he defeated and killed After a wholesale massacre of the Muslim population of Sirhind, Banda Bahadur captured Saharanpur In this way, the entire territory between the Sutlej and Jamuna passed into the hands of the Sikhs The Sikh forces reached the outskirts of Delhi and took to plunder

When the inhabitants of Sirhind Thaneshwar etc reprenented their tales of woe and misery to Bahadur Shah, he hurried to the scene of trouble in June 1710 He bypassed Delhi, prohibited his soldiers from visiting the capital and issued orders to the Hindus in his train to shave off their beards so that they may be distinguished from the enemy Extensive preparations were made to suppress the insurrection In the face of the heavy odds against them, the Sikhs were unable to keep firm to their ground They were driven out of Thaneshwar, ousted from Sirhind, expelled from Lahore, closely invested at Lohgarh and were made to suffer crushing defeats at numerous places, However, they did not give up their plan of harassing the imperialists and plundering those who sided with them On account of the differences between the two Mughal generals, Banda was able to effect his escape There were fresh disturbances in the Bari Doab, but the Sikhs were defeated Banda was exposed to a grave danger However, the preoccupation of the Mughals elsewhere saved the Sikhs for the time being

The Deccan

As regards the Deccan policy of Bahadur Shah, it appears that he was not able to formulate a clear-cut and decisive policy After the death of Kam Baksh,

Zulfiqar Khan was appointed the Viceroy of the Deccan He favoured conciliation with the Marathas, but the Vazir Munim Khan made a different approach Bahadur Shah released Sahu, son of Sambhaji and grandson" of Shivaji That was done on the suggestion of Zulfiqar Khan Sahu was given his former Mansab but the Emperor was reluctant to recognise his claims to Chauth and Sardeshmukhi on the six Subahs of the Deccan This did not work and, the Marathas restarted their plundering raids They ravaged even the Jagirs of Zulfiqar Khan His representative secretly concluded a pact with Sahu by which his claims were conceded but that was not confirmed by the Emperor The result was that the Deccan remained a scene of confusion and lawlessness

Bahadur Shah died on 27 February 1712 and with him disappeared even the last semblance of the glary and greatness of the Mughals He field the reins of administration in his hand His word was final in the state He rose high above party factions and court intrigues Unlike his successors, he cannot be said to have played the role of a mere puppet When Banda escaped capture, Bahadur Shah reprimanded his favourite Prime Minister Munim Khan He showed firmness and discretion in his dealings with the Rajputs but he failed to solve the Rajput problem He might have succeeded in suppressing the Sikhs but before he could do so he died Though his attitude towards the Hindus was less intolerant than that of Aurangzeb, he did not abolish Jizya or cancel discriminatory regulation against the Hindus He failed to, arrest the acceleration of the financial crisis He granted Jagirs recklessly and gave promotions and rewards to all and sundry The result was that before his death, the royal treasury was empty and the of artillery men had fallen into arrears

About Bahadur Shah Sidney Owen writes, "He was the last Emperor of whom anything favourable can be said Henceforth, the rapid and complete abasement and practical dissolution of the Empire are typified in the incapacity and political, insignificance of its sovereigns " Khafi Khan observes, "For generosity, munificence, boundless good nature, extenuation of faults and forgiveness of offences, very few monarchs have been found equal to Bahadur Shah in the histories of past times and especially in the race of Taimur But though he had no vice in his character, such complacency and such negligence were exhibited in the protection of the grate and in the Government and management of the country, that witty sarcastic people found the date of his accession in the words 'Shah-i-Bekhabar' According to Irvine, "Bahadur Shah was a man of mild and equitable temper, learned, dignified and generous to a fault "

Jahandar Shah (1712-13)

The death of Bahadur Shah was followed by a civil war among his four sons, Jahandar Shah, Azim-ush-Shan, Jahan Shah and Rafi-ush-Shah The contestants were in such indecent haste about deciding the question of succession that the dead body of Bahadur Shah was not buried for about a month Jahandar Shah came out successful with the help of Zulfiqar Khan Azim-ush-Shan was defeated and he disappeared in a sand-storm which swept the bed of the Ravi Jahan Shah was killed in the encounter with Zulfiqar Khan Rafi-ush-Shan was deserted and deceived but he fought valiantly and faced death with the supreme courage of a soldier

Jahandar Shah was about 52 years of age at the time of his accession to the throne He celebrated his success by making new appointments and distributing

largesses to his supporters Zulfiqar Khan became the Chief Minister, His father Asad Khan retained the title of Wakil-i-Mutlaq The friends of Zulfiqar Khan were introduced into other high offices The new reign did not stop with merely rewarding friends and supporters, but also took to execution, imprisonment and confiscation of property of those who had joined the vanquished princes The new Wazir fortified his position by surrounding himself with his supporters and eliminated opposition by destroying the unfriendly ones

The new Emperor moved from Lahore to Delhi and the next few months in the capital were given up to dissipation" and the city for a time fell under the domination of the Lord of Misrule Grand illuminations took place three times in every month So much oil was used that it rose to be half Am weight the rupee, then all the oil being expended, they had recourse to clarified butter until it too ceased to be procurable Grain also grew very dear

The Dutch conquered Malacca from the Portuguese in 1641 In 1658, they acquired Ceylon In India, they had Negapatnam on the Madras Coast and Chinsurah in Bengal From the beginning to the end, the Dutch position, in India was insignificant

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'English and French East India Companies

Like other Europeans, Englishmen also were desirous getting the things produced in India and the Far East After their victory ever the Spanish Armada in 1588, their desire to trade directly began to increase In September 1599, a resolution was passed under the chairmanship of Lord Mayor to form an association to trade directly with India On 31st December 1600, Queen Elizabeth granted a Charter to the Governor and Company of Merchants of London trading into the East Indies The Charter authorised the London Company to traffic and trade freely into and from the East Indies, in the countries and parts of Asia and Africa, and into and from all islands, ports, havens, cities, creeks, towns and places of Asia and Africa and America, or any of them beyond the Cape of Bona Esperanza to the Streights of Migellan " The Charter was given for 15 years and the same could be cancelled after giving a notice of two years It is true that James I gave a new Charter which made the Charter of 1600 perpetual, but the same could also be ended by giving a notice of 3 Ways if it was proved that the continuation of the monopoly was injurious to the interests of the people at large

To begin with, the London Company organised separate voyages What was actually done was that a large number of persons contributed money for the

expedition and distributed among themselves the profits of victory There was no dearth of subscribers as the profits made by the Company were enormous In certain cases, the profits were as high as 500 or 600% Joint stock enterprises began in 1612 The first two voyages were directly, towards the Spice Islands The English Company set up a factor, at Bantam and also did some trade there However, it met bitter opposition at the hands of the Dutch Captain Hawkins was sent along with the third voyage He landed at Surat and from there went to the Court of Jahangir to get certain concessions for the English Hawkins was received favourably at the Court and the English were given the permission to settle at Surat However, the concession was cancelled on account of the Portuguese influence at the Mughal Court

In 1612, Captain Best defeated the Portuguese fleet off Swally near Surat The result of this victory was that the Portuguese influence declined and the English Company got the permission to set up a factory at Surat

In 1615, Sir Thomas Roe was sent to the Court of Jahangir by James I, King of England He was successful in securing certain trading concessions for the English Company from the Mughal Emperor, This he did in spite of the opposition from the vested interests

In 1622, the English captured Ormuz from the Portuguese with the help of the King of Iran The English also set up their trading stations at Aramgaon and Masulipatam The site of Madras was bought by the English Company in 1640 Permission was also obtained to set up a fortified factory called Fort St George In 1633, factories were set up at his son Abhay Singh to the court and promised to attend in

person whenever summoned One of the greatest achievements of Farrukh-siyar was the defeat of the Sikhs under Banda Bahadur Taking advantage of the chaos which prevailed after the death of Bahadur Shah, the Sikhs under Banda Bahadur had increased their power Farrukh-siyar decided to suppress their power He appointed Abdul Samad as the Governor of Lahore in 1714 with specific instructions to crush the Sikhs In the meanwhile, dissensions occurred in the ranks of the Sikhs with the result that a large number of Sikh soldiers withdrew their support from Banda Bahadur The Mughal Governor took full advantage of the new development and compelled Banda Bahadur to evacuate Lohgarh and retreat to Gurdaspur Even there he was not allowed to live in peace The place was stormed and Banda was forced to surrender in December 1715 Alongwith his 740 followers, he was taken prisoner and brought to Delhi where he was brutally put to death V A Smith writes, "Banda was executed with fiendish tortures"

The third military project related to the suppression of the Jats who had become strong under the leadership of Churaman who had started levying unauthorised road-tolls, terrorised the local Jagirdars and constructed a stronghold at Thun, Raja Jay Singh pressed him hard And Churaman approached the Wazir to secure pardon for him and the same was given

Party politics

Party politics formed an important phase in the court life during the reign of Farrukh-siyar There was jealousy and rivalry among the nobles belonging to different factions, particularly the Turan's, the Irans, the Afghans and Hindustanis The Turanis had come from Trans-Oxiana and they professed the Sunni faith

The Iranis had migrated from the Eastern and Western provinces of Iran and were Shias The Afghans had come from the mountainous border regions across the Indus and many of them belonged to the Rohilla tribe They were mostly Sunnis, Among the Hindustani nobles were Muslim families who had settled in India for many generations and were jealous of the new arrivals These factions remained under control till the death of Bahadur Shah I However, after that, their importance and influence increased because every rival claimant to the imperial throne asked for their help Each faction tried to establish its control over the person of the Emperor and was prepared to adopt any means to achieve its objective These parties conformed neither to religion nor to race nor even to nationality As to principles, there were none whatsoever It were the individuals and their satellites who mattered Their governing passion was self-interest and their guiding maxim was personal aggrandisement None cared for the fairness or foulness of the means to achieve its end The repercussions of such display of rivalry and disunity were far-reaching an the fortunes of the Empire and disastrous for Farrukh-siyar

The Mughal imperial court was the centre of intrigues and counter-intrigues by one party against the other The palace revolutions of king-making were the work of the Hindustani party under the leadership of the Sayyid Brothers, while the more effective and real revolution by which was brought about the fall of the Sayyid Brothers was the work of the Irani or Turani party, also called "Emperor's friends " This triumph of the king's friends over the king-makers was of very great importance in history Asaf Jah and his brother Mohammad Amin Khan thus gained ascendancy later in the court and became the pillars of

the Mughal imperial court None of these parties had any solid national programme before them which could have given them the name of political parties They, were only party factions which concerned themselves merely with efforts for their personal ascendancy and achievement of their selfish ends The worst consequence of this party politics was that the Mughal imperial Court became a hotbed of intrigues which produced confusion, in the Court and thus resulted in corruption and inefficiency in the entire governmental machinery of the Empire

Plot against Sayyid Brothers

Farrukh-siyar participated in three plots against the Sayyid Brothers When Husain Ali was deputed to lead the imperial forces to quell the insurrection in Rajputana, secret letters were written to Ajit Singh Rathor, the rebel Raja of Jodhpur, promising him rich reward if he did away with Husain Ali However, the plot failed Ajit Singh submitted and passed on the letters of Farrukh-siyar to Husain Ali

Another plot was hatched Nizam-ul-Mulk, the Viceroy of the Deccan, was so-called and the province was put under the charge of Husain Ali When Husain Ali was on the way to the South, Daud Khan, Deputy Governor of the Deccan, was secretly instigated to obstruct him However, Daud Khan was defeated and killed and the plot failed

An attempt was made on the life of Saiyad Abdullah Khan under the very nose of the Emperor At the Nauroz ceremonies, the Wazir Abdullah Khan was to be surrounded and assassinated or imprisoned However, the plot miscarried Abdullah Khan came to know of the, trap and overawed Farrukh-siyar by a large massing of the troops in advance

Prof S R Sharma writes, "In the fact of such persistent dangers, the Sayyid Brothers would have been fools if they also did not make efforts to weaken, outwit or overawe their enemies " The result was that there were manoeuvres and counter-manoeuvres Farrukh-siyar tried one trusted noble after another to lay hold of Abdullah Khan while his brother Husain Ali was in the Deccan, but none had the courage to carry out his nefarious' design Raja Ajit Singh, the father-in-law of Farrukh-siyar, was called for help by the Emperor The Raja knew the character of his son-in-law He came to Delhi but he threw in his lot with Abdullah Khan Even Nizam-ul-Mulk and his cousin Muhammad Amin Khan turned against the Emperor When the imperial officers were fighting against the rebellions Jats, their chieftain Churaman Jat was helped secretly by Abdullah Khan

The relations between the Emperor and the Sayyid Brothers were very Much strained There was an improvement for some time when Mir Jumla, the favourite of the Emperor, was sent away to Patna and Husain Ali left for the Deccan as the Subedar of the six Subahs of the Deccan However, the fire of misunderstanding was fanned to full fury again when Mir Jumla came back from Patna and Nizam-ul-Mulk from the Deccan and Inayatullah Kashmiri was appointed Diwan-i-Khalsa, much against the wishes of Sayyid Abdullah Khan The quest by Farrukh-siyar of a substitute for Abdullah Khan brought the quarrel to a head Abdullah Khan succeeded in weaning away from the side of the Emperor all his supporters He then sent express messages to his brother Husain Ali in the Deccan asking him to return to Delhi as quickly as possible East Indies The London Company was to be given a notice of three years, (expiring in 1701) to wind up its business

In order to strengthen its position, the old Company bought shares worth £315,000 in the new Company There was ruinous competition between the two Companies for some time The result was that the new Company began to lose heavily Ultimately, a compromise was arrived at in 1702 According to this compromise "the old Company was to maintain its separate existence for seven years, but the trade of the two companies was to be carried on jointly, in the name of the English Company, but for the common benefit of both under the direction of twenty-four managers, twelve to be selected by each Company At the end of the seven years, the old Company was to surrender its Charters " The new Company was to carry on its trade in the name of "The United Company of Merchants of England trading to the East Indies " In March 1709, the London Company surrendered its Charters to Queen Anne

The French East India company

When other European nations were desirous of trading with India and having a share of the profits, the French also thought of trying their luck It was in 1611 that King Louis XII of France granted letters patent to a Company for the monopoly of the eastern trade However, that attempt ended in smoke In 1664, a new Company was started under the guidance of Colbert and Louis XIV, The Government of France under took to defend the territories of the French Company The French Company was to concentrate on India Madagascar was to serve as a halfway house In December 1667, the first French factory was established at Surat by Francis Caron who was nominated as Director-General Another French factory was established at Masulipatam in December 1669 This was facilitated by a grant from the King of Golkunda which freed the Company from import and

export duty Caron was called back in 1672 and his place was taken by Francis Martin

Martin was one of the real founders of the French Company in India In the year of his appointment, he founded the settlement of Pondicherry under a grant from Sher Khan Lodi, the King of Bijapur In spite of the fact that Martin did not get help from the Home Government he was able to make Pondicherry the premier settlement of the French on the Indian mainland It is true that Pondicherry had to be surrendered to the Dutch in 1693 on account of their superior forces, but the same was restored to the French in 1697 by the Treaty of Ryswick Mar, the was once again appointed the Governor of Pondicherry In 1706, Martin died

The French had also their settlements at Chandranagar, Balasore and Qasim Bazar On the Malabar Coast, the French got Mahe in 1725 In 1739, they got Karaikal on the Coromandel Coast

After the death of Martin, there was confusion in the affairs of the French East India Company for some time However, after 1726, things began to improve In 1735, Dumas became the Governor of Pondicherry He got permission from Delhi to coin money In 1739, he got Karaikal as a reward for his support of a pretender to the throne of Tanjore This is where the French Company stood when it came into conflict with the English East India Company in the 1740's

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The Conquest of Bengal

After the death of Aurangzeb, the Mughal empire began to disintegrate and various parts of the empire became independent under different heads In the case of Bangal, Ali Vardi Khan made himself independent He was possessed of a lot of resourcefulness, and uncommon ability The Marathas gave him a lot of trouble but ultimately he made peace with them by handing over to them the province of Orissa He also promised to pay a sum of Rs 12 lakhs a year as Chauth He maintained friendly relations with the Englishmen However, he did not allow them to fortify their settlements He continued to rule, up to 1756

The death of Aurangzeb marked the decline of the Mughal empire Headstrong governors began tosser their independence Nizam-ul-Mulk had made himself free in the Deccan and Murshid Quli Jafar Khan in Bengal The Mughal *subah* of Bengal comprised the present province of Orissa also Murshid Quli Khan was a strong and able governor who tried his best to better the economic lot of his people He died in 1727 and was succeeded by his son-in-law Shuja-ud-din Shuja-ud-din- annexed Bihar also in his subah and sent Alivardi Khan as its Deputy Governor, Shuja, having died in 1739, was succeeded by his son Sarfraz Khan Alivardi was a very ambitious person and had his eyes on the Nawabship of Bengal He, in complicity with some other persons, succeeded in murdering Sarfrz Khan and occupying the gaddi of Bengal

Battle of Plassey - Causes (1757)

Though the Dutch, the French and the English all had their settlements in Bengal yet the English settlements were the most well-off With the accession of Siraj-ud-daulla to the *gaddi* of Bengal, the hostilities between him and the English broke out, the causes whereof can be discussed as below

Disputed accession of Siraj-ud-daulla Alivardi Khan had no male issue to succeed him He had three daughters Though Alivardi himself was an able an strong person, yet the uncertainty of succession was a matter of great anxiety He fell ill and nominated Siraj-ud-daulla, the son of his youngest daughter, as his success for So Siraj-ud-daulla occupied the gaddi of Bengal in 1756 after the death of his grand-father But his aunt Ghasiti Begum of Dacca and his cousin Shaukat Jang of Purneah rose as rival claimants Some nobles of the Bengal Court took up the cause of these claimants and weakened the position of the Nawab The English who had already fixed their eyes on the rich land of Bengal were encouraged to defy the authority of the Nawab

The English helped Ghasiti Begum Even in the lifetime of Alivardi, a rumour had spread that the English were espousing the cause of Ghasiti Begum Though Dr Forth, the English agent at Quasimbazar, had denied this rumour, yet the rumour had a lot of truth in it and siraj-ud-daulla was fully convinced of it So the Nawab had bitter feelings against the English

The affair of Krishnaballabh Rajballah was the Diwan of Ghasiti Begum's estate The Nawab of Bengal accused the Diwan of falsifying the accounts and embezzling Begum's wealth The Diwan sent his son Krishnaballah with all his wealth and his family to Calcutta to seek the protection of the English The

Nawab demanded the surrender of the Diwan's son, which the English were not prepared to do They wanted to reap advantage of the rift between the two claimants

Fortification Alivardi had, in his lifetime, not allowed Europeans to fortify their settlements But his death followed by a rift about the succession encouraged them to raise fortifications in their respective settlements Siraj-ud-daulla was quite conscious of it and he at once wrote to them to demolish these fortifications as he looked upon them as merely a set of merchants While the French obeyed his order, the English continued with their work of fortifications which was sure to embitter the mind of Siraj against them

Nawab's apprehensions The knowledge of Anglo-French exploits in Deccan raised doubts in the mind of the Nawab He had a strong apprehension that the English had an evil eye on his subah Moreover, he never liked to make his province a battle-field between the English and the French He, in fact, had developed a strong contempt for the English because of their objectionable activities

Misuse of Dastaks The English East India Company had started abusing the privileges regarding its trade granted to it by the Court of Delhi in 1716-17 Merchants used the *dastaks* (pass ports) to carry on their personal trade duty-free It was a sheer loss to the revenues of the Nawab as also it roused the jealousy of Indian merchants The Nawab took serious objection to it He demanded that

> The English Company should promise to remove the foregoing complaints of their conduct and will agree to trade upon the same terms as other merchants did in the times of his grandfather”

The English did not comply with his demand and the hostilities broke out between them and the Nawab

Drake's letter Siraj-ud-daulla, though highly offended at the conduct of the English, decided to remove the internal danger of his claimants first, as it was essential for his personal safety Shrewdly enough he succeeded in bringing Ghasiti Begum to his own palace and pacify her Now he marched against Shaukat Jang of Purniah But he had hardly reached Rajmahal when a letter from Mr Drake the Governor of Calcutta, was delivered to him Mr Drake though in a very polite language refuted all the charges against the English and turned down the demands of the Nawab This exhausted the patience of the Nawab and the returned to Murshidabad to start a campaign against the English

Capture of Qasim Bazar, 1756 On the 4th of June, 1756 Siraj captured the English settlement at Qasim Bazar which was at a very short distance from Murshidabad, his capital

Capture of Calcutta, 1756. Immediately after seizing the factory of Qasim Bazar, the Nawab proceeded to Calcutta with a large army about 50,000 strong He stormed the fort of Calcutta on the 16th June The English offered a resistance for three days but at last they had to leave the fort under Holwell with a small force while the English women and children were removed to Fulta, some 20 miles downstream Holwell, too, had to surrender after a feeble resistance

Black Hole Incident. It is said that the Nawab took 146 Englishmen as prisoners and shut them for the night in a small cell 18' x 14 5/6' in area

Out of these 146 men one hundred and twenty-three died to suffocation and heat and only 23 survived

to tell the tale of thıs woe The truth of thıs ıncıdent has been questıoned on several grounds Even the then records of the Calcutta Councıl do not mentıon ıt and the shuttıng of 146 men ın so small a room seem ımpossıble Whatever may be the truth about thıs Black Hole ıncıdent, ıt certaınly aggravated the sıtuatıon and the Madras authorıtıes were flared up at the news of thıs dısmal tragedy

The recapture of Calcutta, 1757. The Madras authorıtıes at once despatched a naval force under Admıral Watson and a land force under Robert Clıve After a dıfficult voyage the forces reached Calcutta and recaptured the town ın January 1757 from General Manık Chand whom the Nawab had left there as hıs governor The Englısh also plundered Hooglı and ıts surroundıngs

The Nawab, ın the mean tıme, had marched agaınst Shaukat Jang, defeated and kılled hım as he had procured a firman from the court of Delhı for the subahshıp of Bengal Now Sıraȷ-ud-daulla turned hıs attentıon agaınst to the Englısh He came down upon the Englısh but after an ındecısıve engagement both the partıes agreed to conclude a mutual treaty

Treaty of Alınagar, 1757. Thıs was an offensıve and defensıve treaty concluded between the Englısh and Nawab Sıraȷ-ud-daulla on February 9, 1757 The terms of thıs treaty were as below

a All prıvıleges granted to the Brıtısh by the Delhı Court were confirmed

b All goods under the Brıtısh dastaks were to be duty-free throughout the entıre provınce of Bengal

c The Nawab restored all the factorıes and settlements of the Englısh and promısed to ındemnıfy the damage thereof

d Calcutta was to be fortified according to the will of the British

e The British were given the right of mining coins

This treaty was indeed forced upon both the parties by the pressure of circumstances Neither party ever intended to be sincere to it and in a very short time the hostilities were resumed

Capture of Chandernagar, 1757 Clive through his foresight, saw through the importance of Chanderanagar It could easily become a centre of intrigues against the English and it would have been very difficult to cope with the combined forces of the French and the Nawab So Clive stormed this French settlement and captured it Siraj could not foresee the diplomacy of Clive an he did nothing to save chanderanagar Now the way for Clive's victory was quite clear He was bent upon replacing Siraj by a Nawab who would be more amenable

Importance Though from the military point of view the battle of Plassey was nothing but a skirmish, it ranks with the most decisive battles of Indian History It was the first battle in which the English troops fought not as auxiliaries but as principal forces against a native army Politically this battle is one the most important battles of the world history even It opened the road for British conquest of Bengal where from they conquered the whole of India within a century only This battle yielded far-reaching consequences which can be discussed as below

1 *It established British supremacy in Bengal* The battle of Plassey was a revolution which brought for the *subah* a new Nawab He was a mere figurehead while the real power passed into the hands of Clive The Nawab was to play a puppet in the hands of the

Company He was not free anyway Whenever he tried to rid himself of the Company's clutches, he was deposed Thus the British came to possess virtually the province of Bengal which offered them the maximum possible chances of growing at the expense of the native power In the words of Admiral Watson

> Plassey is of extraordinary importance not only to the Company but to British nation in general ”

2 *Monetary gains to the Company* From the monetary point of view, this battle proved very advantageous to the British The price which Mir Jafar had to pay for the gaddi of Bengal, amounted to some 17,396,761 rupees The treasury of Bengal was drained off to Calcutta Besides, the trade of the Company was declared free throughout the subah The Company got the Zamindari of 24 parganas and a mint was allowed to be established at Calcutta These advantages not only yielded a large income for the company but were an insurance against future dangers also

> The Company, by an accession of territory, has an opportunity of making an a ample settlement, which under proper management may not only he extremely serviceable to her, but also to the Nation ”

3 *Moral effects* The moral effect of this victory of the English was undoubtedly very great The new Nawab lost all prestige and respect The loyalty and goodwill of the people towards the Nawab disappeared and a scramble for the *gaddi* began The English, too, found this game of making and unmaking Nawabs very profitable and an easy road to power and pelf This victory pushed the English towards a century wherein their character is seen at the lowest ebb They began to be actuated by greed, corruption and unscrupulousness

4 *Prestige of the Company raised.* The victory at Plassey had a significant effect on the Anglo-French struggle also The French were ousted from Bengal which weakened their position The English, on the other hand, came to be virtual master of Bengal and of its rich resources in mean and money These resources were used in the third Carnatic War which ended in 1763 with the defeat of the French The conquest of Bengal by the English served as a potent factor in contributing to their ultimate success of the English against the French

6 *Victory of Northern India facilitated* The success in the battle of Plassey paved the way for the British conquest of northern India The radical weakness of the native power became known and the English began to try to make room for themselves in the country In a course of few years, the English defeated Nawab Shuja-ud-daulla of Oudh and Shah Alam the Emperor of Delhi at Buxar which marks the origin of the British power in India

7 *More revolutions in Bengal* This revolution of 1757 established the supremacy of the British in Bengal They were the masters while the Nawab a puppet in their hands who could not refuse to comply with the demands of the Company This led to extreme greed of the Company and its officials Whenever the Nawab defied the demands of the Company, it tired to bring about a revolution with a view to replacing him The replacement of Mir Jafar by Mir Qasim can be cited as an example which amply bears out the truth of this fact

After the death of Ali Vardi Khan, his grandson called Siraj-ud-Daula became the Nawab of Bengal He was a young man of hardly 24 He was not only self-willed but also self-indulgent Soon after his succession

to the throne, the young Nawab came ınto conflıct wıth the Englısh ın Bengal There were many causes for thıs rupture In antıcıpatıon of the breakıng out of the Seven Years War, the Englısh ın Bengal began to fortıfy theır settlements As they dıd so wıthout the permıssıon of the Nawab the latter ordered them, to demolısh the same However, the Englısh refused to do so and thıs provıded a ground of complaınt to the Nawab Moreover, the Englısh took up the cause of Shaukat Jang who was a rıval of Saraȷ-ud-Daula The Englısh also gave shelter to a rıch merchant of Bengal and refused to hand hım over to the Nawab even when the latter made a demand to that effect It was also found that the Englıshmen were abusıng the trade prıvıleges whıch were gıven to them by the Government

"Black-hole" The result of all thıs was Sıraȷ-ud-Daula captured the Englısh factory at Kasım Bazar and also took possessıon of the cıty of Calcutta One hundred and fotry-sıx persons ıncludıng one woman were captured and shut up ın a very small room at nıght The heat was so great and the spare was small that 123 of them were suffocated to death Only 23 survıved and one of them was Holwell Thıs ıncıdent ıs known as the Black-hole Tragedy

There has been a lot of controversy as to whether the Black-hole tragedy was a realıty or a myth It ıs maıntaıned by some hıstorıans that the so-called Black-hole tragedy never took place It ıs poınted out that ıt ıs physıcally ımpossıble to shut up 146 persons ın a room whıch ıs only 22 ft long and 14 ft wıde Moreover, the contemporary Muslım account such as Seır Mutaqhreın and Rıyas-us-Salatın do not mentıon thıs ıncıdent at all It ıs poınted out that the story of the Black-hole tragedy was ınvented merely for the purpose of arousıng the ındıgnatıon of the Englıshmen

in India and that purpose was amply served Holwell is the only person who makes a mention of this tragedy he is hardly reliable Probably, he did so for the purpose of getting promotion

Whatever the truth, when the news of the Black-hole, tragedy reached Madras, the Englishmen were indignant At once Admiral Watson and Clive were sent to Bengal to have revenge for the Black-hole tragedy They were able to capture Calcutta without much difficulty Siraj-ud-Daula attacked Calcutta and, there was an indecisive battle However, peace was restored and the Nawab restored the privileges of the English Company The latter were also allowed to fortify Calcutta As the Seven Years' War had broken out, the English captured Chandranagar from the French

Although outwardly Clive had made peace with Siraj-ud-Daula, he was determined to have revenge for the Black-hole tragedy He hatched a conspiracy against the Nawab Rai Durlab, the Treasurer of the Nawab Mir Jafar, the Commander-in-Chief of the Nawab's forces, and Jagat Seth, the richest banker of Bengal, were induced to revolt against the Nawab The details of the conspiracy were settled through Chand It was decided that Clive was to march at once to Plassey Mir Jafar was to desert the Nawab and join Clive with all the forces under this command The Nawab was to be deposed and Mir Jafar was to be put in his place

However, when all the details were settled, Amin Chand threatened to divulge the whole conspiracy unless he was paid a sum of Rs 30 lakhs He also wanted that amount to be entered into the treaty When Clive came to know of this demand, he made up his mind to deal with Amin Chand in the way he

deserved He got two copies of the treaty prepared One was on white paper and the other was on red paper In the treaty on the white paper there was no mention of the payment of Rs 30 lakhs to Amin Chand The treaty on the red paper provided for that amount When Clive asked Admiral Watson to sign the false treaty, he refused The result was that Clive himself forged the signatures of Watson on the false treaty The action of Clive has been universally condemned but the defended it on the ground of expediency

Battle of Plassey When everything was ready, Clive wrote a letter to Nawab Siraj-ud-Daula, complaining of the grievances of the Englishmen in Bengal He marched towards Plassey at the head of his army To begin with, the situation seemed to be very serious for Clive He was advised not to fight However, he made up this mind to give battle to the enemy His artillery created confusion in the ranks of the enemy At this time, Mir Jafar joined Clive As soon as this happened, the battle was over Clive got a cheap and decisive victory Siraj-ud-Daula ran away to Murshidabad and from there to Patna However, he was captured and put to death by Miran, he son of Mir Jafar

The result of the battle of Plassey was that Mir Jafar was put on the throne of Bengal He gave 24 Parganas and one crore of rupees to the Company He also gave presents to other English officers of the Company The share of Clive was £334,000

Deposition of Mir Jafar There were many causes which were responsible for the deposition of Mir Jafar in 1760 His treasury was empty and he had no money to pay either to the Company in the form of instalments or bribes to die servants of the Company

The servants of the Company also thought that if there was a change of Government Bengal, there was every likelihood of their getting presents or bribes from the new successor The invasions of Ali Gohour and the Dutch had also cost Mir Jafar a lot of money When the Marathas attacked Bengal, he had again to ask for the English help However, every intervention on the part of the English Company "made the control of the Company over Bengal more unmistakable and the restraining of its servants more difficult, while the burden of maintaining these troops formed a heavy drain on the Company's resources and Mir Jafar, whose treasury was exhausted, could not defray those charges "

The situation in Bengal became desperate after the death of Miran, the son of Mir Jafar Mir Kasim, the son-in-law of Mir Jafar, began to aspire to be the Nawab of Bengal He had already given proof of his intelligence as the Faujdar of Rangpur and Purniah He was able to win over the Calcutta Council He entered into a treaty with the English Company in September 1760 By this treaty, he agreed to give to the English Company the three districts of Burdwan, Midnapore and Chitta gong He also agreed to pay immediately the arrears of money due from Mir Jafar to the English Company He also promised to pay Rs 5 lakhs towards the Carnatic wars He agreed to pay £50,000 to Vansittart, £27,000 to Holwell and £25,000 to the other members of the Calcutta Council

When all this was settled between the Calcutta Council and Mir Kasim, Vanittart went to Murshidabad to secure the consent of Mir Jafar The latter strongly objected to the new arrangement, However, he found that his objections were of no avail He declared, "His life would not be worth a day's purchase once Mir Kasim had been recognised and he

would rather retire to Calcutta than continue to be the Nawab on such terms ” Mir Jafar left the throne and went away to Calcutta There he began to live as a pensioner of Mir Kasim It cannot be denied that the deposition of Mir Jafar was “in breach of a treaty founded on the most solemn oaths ” The members of the Calcutta Council deserve all the condemnation They were bound to support him by “the most solemn ties” His deposition was “an indelible stain upon our national character” Perhaps, Mir Jafar deserved this fate He himself had betrayed his master in 1757

Mir Kasim (1760-63) it is admitted on all hands that Mir Kasim was the most efficient of all the Nawabs of Bengal from 1756 onwards He had given a proof of his administrative ability as a Faujdar He was the man who could win over people by his personality FUs contemporaries have praised his qualities of head and heart According to Vansittart, “he discharged the Company’s debt and the heavy arrears of his army, retrenched the expenses of his court which had consumed that income of his predecessors and secured his own authority over the country by reducing the power of the zamindars who were before continual disturbance of the peace of the province ” Ghulam Hussain has Paid a tribute to Mir Kasim in these words “in unravelling the intricacies of affairs of government and especially the knotty mysteries of finance, in I ran and determining private differences, in establishing regular payment for his troops and for his household, in honouring and rewarding men of merit and men of learning in conducting his expenditure exactly between the extremities of parsimony and prodigality, and in knowing intuitively where he must spend freely and where with moderation—in all these qualifications, he was an incomparable man indeed and the most

extraordinary prince of his age" Mir Kasim made a very good beginning He suppressed the rebellious zamindars of Bengal and Bihar, who had challenged the authority of the Nawab on previous occasions He forced the old officers to give up the money which they had misappropriated He levied some Abwabs or additional cesses He tried to organise his army in the same way as the Europeans did He made arrangements for the manufacture of fire-locks and guns at Monghyr

Mir Kasim transferred his capital from Murshidabad to Monghyr Many reasons have been suggested for the change The Nawab required a strongly fortified place for his permanent residence and Murshidabad did not serve that purpose Monghyr could put at his disposal a satisfactory fort which by means of necessary improvement could be made stronger and more serviceable The Nawab hoped to start at Monghyr with a clean, slate as he would be absolutely free from the atmosphere of the old capital, its intrigues and corruption Murshidabad was the centre of late Nawabs and was still associated with their names The vanity of Mir Kasim required some new place where he could inaugurate his new regime The transfer had both spectacular and psychological aspects Moreover, there was a suspicion in the mind of Mir Kasim, that Mir Jafar would be restored by the Company sooner or later and the attitude of Ellis and the members of the opposition in the Council deepened his suspicion Under the circumstances, the Nawab may have considered it prudent to leave the old capital and settle at a place which was far away from Calcutta so that if Mir Jafar was re-appointed, he may be able to offer resistance or mape to Oudh The Nawab also wanted to remain at a safe distance from Calcutta so that there may be less of supervision and

interference from the English side and he may be able to develop an army without hindrance with a view to establishing his complete independence by ultimately overthrowing the power of the English,

After removing his capital from Murshidabad to Monghyr, the Nawab seriously turned his attention to the subject of private inland trade of the servants of the Company By a Firman of 1717, the English Company had been given the privilege of free seaborne trade However, the servants of the Company had taken advantage of the chaotic condition in the country and started abusing the privilege by extending the same to the private trade of all kinds As the Nawab was in need of money and he found that he was being deprived of a lot of his revenues on account of the illegal private trade carried on by the servants of the Company he decided to stop the same Under instructions from the Nawab, his officers in the districts began to stop the boats belonging to the English merchants in spite of their having Dastaks with them The Englishmen protested The Chief and Council at Dacca wrote thus in October 1762 "At every Chokey our boats are stopped, the people insulted, and the flag used with the utmost and most gross contempt " In, the same month, the Chief and Council at Chittagong wrote thus "Our business is entirely put to a stop by the Nawab's people and our boats not suffered to pass the Chokeys, the zamindars demanding very considerable duties to be paid to them, declaring that they have orders from Cossim Allee Cawn so to do " A report front Lakhipur was to the following effect Within these few days, every boat 'Which we have sent out of the river has been stopped at the different Chokeys, notwithstanding they have the Chief's Dustuck " The Faujdar of Katwa stopped 150 boats belonging to the English gentlemen although

they had tıre Dustucks of the Company All these facts ındıcated that the Nawab had decıded to stop the duty-free trade of the servants of tıre Company

All sorts of obstructıons to the trade of the Company came to be reported Ellıs complaıned of the ınterference of the local Amıl wıth the weavers and bleachers ın theır busıness at Jahanabad The Zıladars of the Nawab were ınstructed to dırect the ryots not to have any dealıngs wıth the Englısh The Nawab suddenly multıplıed the number of customs statıons ın the country wıth a vıew to checkıng the prıvate trade of the Englısh New statıons were establıshed ın places where there, was none before The number of soldıers statıoned at the Chaukıs was ıncreased so that Englısh boats could be stopped effectıvely The Nawab also complaıned of the ıncrease ın a number of factorıes of the company

The most serıous charge of the Nawab was agaınst the rapacıty of the Gumashtahs of the Company About them, he wrote thus "The Gumashtahs who have gone ınto the country on tıre part of your gentlemen, regardless of what any one says to them, ınsolently use vıolent means to carry on theır traffic, and whenever a gunge or golah has been establıshed, they act as Zemındars Taalookdars and renters, and leave my offıcers no authorıty, and besıdes thıs, they send other people's goods wıth theır own, under the protectıon of theır dustucks The allegatıons of the Nawab were substantıally correct The Gumashtahs were generally a set of the worst type of rascals whose oppressıve conduct was an open scandal Theır masters usually supported them Assured of sympathy and assıstance, the Englısh agents practısed the worst tyranny wherever they went They compelled the ryots to sell theır goods below the market rate and purchase tıre commodıtıes

they had brought at very high prices They forcibly exacted large presents from the people and thus plundered them under this pretext They sold dustucks to private merchants for money Sergeant Brego wrote thus in May 1762 "A gentleman sends a Gumashtah here to buy or sell, he immediately looks upon himself as sufficient to force every inhabitant, either to buy his goods or sell him theirs, and on refusal aflogging, or confinement immediately ensues Before justice was given in the public cutcherree, but now every Gumashtah has become a judge and every one's house a cutcherree, they even pass sentences on the Zemindars themselves and draw money from them by pretended injuries " The Faujdar of Dacca wrote thus in September 1762 "The Gumashtahs of Luckypoor and Dacca , factories oblige the merchants, etc , to take tobacco, cotton, iron and sundry other things at a price exceeding, that of the bazar and then export the money from them by force, besides they take direct money from the peons and make them pay a fine for breaking their agreement By these proceedings the Aurangs and other places are ruined The Gumashtahs of Luckypoor factory have taken the taalookdars taalooks from the tahsildar by force for their own use and will not pay the rent By these disturbances, the country is, ruined and the ryots cannot stay in their houses, not pay they malgujaree "

In April 1762, Mr. Hastings wrote thus "I beg leave to lay before you a grievance which calls for redress and will, unless duly attended to, tender ineffectual any endeavours to create a firm or lasting harmony between the Nawab and the Company I mean the oppressions committed under the sanction of the English name This evil, I am well assured, is not confined to our dependents alone, but is practised all over the country by people falsely assuming the habits

of our sepoys, or calling themselves our Gumashtahs" According to Verelst himself, "English agents or Gumashtahs, not contented with injuring, the people trampled on the authority of the government, binding and punishing the Nabob's officers wherever they presume to interfere

The disputes arising out of the private trade of the, English gentlemen became so serious and frequent that a conflict between the Nawab, and the Company was imminent There were complaints and counter-complaints The only alternative to war was a compromise and Mr Vansittart decided to visit Monghyr to settle the points of dispute amicably When Vansittart reached Monghyr in November 1762, he and his party were treated "with all the usual marks of respect and friendship" The Nawab related to Vansittart his grievances He contended that the private trade of the servants of the Company was not covered by the Firmans of Company His administration was adversely affected by the private trade and it was difficult for him to maintain law and order in the country He was suffering a heavy loss in his customs duty Under the protection of the name of the Company innumerable persons passed their goods duty-free The prestige of his government suffered on account of the irregularities of private trade The Gumashtahs and servants of the Company oppressed the people The gentlemen of the factories held farms, taaluqs, ganjs and golas They borrowed from and lent to the people They gave protection to his dependents They coined money at different places They used force in the purchase and sale of goods

The Nawab demanded the total abolition of private trade of English gentlemen but Vansittart had no authority to give his approval without the consent of the Council In spite of that, Vansittart, agreed to

surrender the right of the servants of the Company to trade duty-free Vansittart also agreed that the Chiefs of the factories were to be instructed not to oppress their ryots and protect their dependents The Faujdars were to be permitted to try my offending Gumashtah The Chiefs of Chitragong and Lakhipur were not to work the saltpans themselves The Chiefs and Gumashtalis of the factories were not to rent or purchase any land nor lend to or borrow from the zamindars and officers of the government The Chiefs and Gumahstahs of the factories were not to obstruct the Dallals and weavers of the government The bullion of the English gentlemen and Gomashtahs was not to be coined in the English mints It was agreed that only the export or import trade of the Company was to be duty-free For the inland trade, the Dastak of the Company was not to be granted Duties were to be paid according to the fixed rate on all goods meant for the inland trade Duties were to be paid only once before the despatch of goods The goods were not to be retained after the Dastak was examined by the Chaukidars If any person was without a Dastak or used fraudulently the Dastak of the Company, his goods were to be confiscated The Gumashtahs were not to, use force in buying or selling and were to bring all their complaints to the Faujdars instead of taking the law into their own hands

Dr Nandlal Chatterji has criticised the deal made by Vansittart with the Nawab on many grounds According to him, Vansittart showed great imprudence in divulging his plan to the Nawab before discussing it in the Council He ought to have anticipated opposition from his colleagues He should not have forgotten that he had no authority to make fundamental changes on behalf of the Council He unwisely submitted to the desire of the Nawab to control the Gumashtahs and

other subordinates of the Company through the Faujdars He should not have agreed to the stoppage of the making of the coins of the Company at different mills No clear-cut distinction was made between the trade of the Company and that of its servants Vansittart made a mistake in accepting a gift from the Nawab and this could easily be interpreted as a bribe from the Nawab for the favours given to him

The Council at Calcutta rejected the agreement arrived at between Vansittart and Mir Kasim The result was that the Nawab decided to abolish the duties altogether The English clamoured against this and insisted upon having preferential treatment as against other traders Ellis, the chief of the English factory at Patna, asserted that he considered it to be the rights and privileges of the English and even made an attempt to capture the city of Patna However, his attempt failed and the garrison was destroyed This led to the outbreak of war between the English and, Mir Kasim in 1763 According to Ramsay Muir, Ellis deliberately aimed at war 'in order that the obstacle to the private traffic of himself and his friends might be removed"

In June 1763 Major Adams was sent to fight against Mir Kasim Many battles were fought with the Nawab's troops and most important of them were those at Katwah, Giria, Suti and Udaynala

When Mir Kasim found his cause hopeless, he proceeded towards Patna In despair, he ordered the Indian prisoners to be put to death and some of them were Raja Ramnarain, Raja Rajballabh, etc Then came the turn of the European prisoners He, ordered his officers to kill all the European prisoners However, their reply was as follows "No. Turn them out with arms in their hands and we will fight them to death

We are soldiers and not executors " However, that work was done by a German named Walter Rheinhardt, He is better known by the name of Somru He ordered his soldiers to mount the roofs of the prison and fire on the prisoners The result was that not a single man was saved

Even before the defeat of Mir Kasim, Mir Jafar had already been declared as the future Nawab of Bengal This had been done in July 1763 The new Nawab agreed that "the English shall carry on their trade by means of their own Dustuks, free from all duties, taxes and impositions, in all arts of the country excepting the salt on which a duty of two and a half per cent is to be levied on the Rowna of Hoogly market price, wherein, it is further agreed, that the late Perwannahs issued by Kossim Ally Khan granting to all merchants the exemption of all duties for the space of two years shall be reversed and called in and the duties collected as before " Mir Jafar also promised to make compensation for all losses incurred by the English Company However, his throne was not a bed of roses The evils of Dustuks began to increase Even the revenues of the State could not be collected

Battle of Buxar After his defeat in 1763, Mir Kasim went away to Oudh Emperor Shah Alam was also in Oudh The Nawabs of Oudh looked forward to Bengal for their expansion and consequently a conflict between the Nawab of Oudh and the English was inevitable Mir Kasim helped the Nawab Vazir of Oudh by suppressing the rebels of Bundelkhand It was agreed between the parties that "on the Vazir's crossing the Ganga and entering the enemy's country, Mir Kasim from that day and for so long as the expedition might last, would pay him for the expenses of his army eleven lacs of rupees per month " Some adventurous Frenchmen also joined. To begin with,

there were some indecisive engagements However, in October 1764, there took place the famous Battle of Buxar Munro defeated both Mir Kasim and Nawab Vazir of Oudh Shuja-ud-Daula was finally defeated in May 1765 and Oudh lay completely prostrate at the feet of the English The Mughal emperor came over to the side of the English and Mir Kasim spent the rest of his days as a wanderer

Historians have attached great importance to the battle of Buxar According to Broome, on the battle of Buxar depended the fate of India, According to Sir James Stephen, the battle of Buxar deserves far more credit than the battle of Plassey as the origin of the British power in India It was a fiercely contested battle The English lost 847 killed and wounded, The enemy left behind 2,000 dead It was not merely the Nawab, of Bengal but the emperor of all India and his titular Prime Minister who were defeated If the battle of Plassey enabled the English Company to put a puppet on the throne of Bengal, the battle of Buxar did much more It gave the English an opportunity to bring under their control the northwestern frontier of the Subah According to Ramsay Muir, "Buxar finally riveted the shackles of Company's rule upon Bengal "

Estimate of Mir Kasim Mir Kasim was an able, vigilant and strict administrator He had an extraordinary ability for the routine work of government He had great enthusiasm for reform and efficiency He showed great energy perseverance and acuteness in overhauling the administration of his predecessors He rehabilitated the finances He reorganised the departments of revenue and justice He created a new army on Western lines He repressed the power of the barons

He not only worked hard himself but he knew

how to mike his subordinates work He was an indefatigable worker He was a clever judge of the character of those with whom he had to deal He was a strict disciplinarian He was feared by his subordinates for his merciless severity He tried to remove fraud, corruption and negligence with a heavy hand He enforced regularity and discipline with an iron hand According to Ghulam Hussain, the Nawab was the most remarkable prince of his age on account of his skill in technical problem of administration and finance, insight into man's character and motives, enforcement of a strict or economy without appearance of parsimony and introduction of regularity in the payments of the troops

If he had virtues, he had his shortcomings also He lacked personal courage and a genius for war He was vain and ambitious At the same time he was timid and cowardly He did not possess any military talent In the hour of slightest danger Mir Kasim became nervous He could not face a crisis in a calm manner He was a mixture of ambition and timidity

He did not trust others He suspected every official, high or low Mere suspicion was enough to punish any person Any subordinate could be imprisoned of executed for a very ordinary omission The Nawab was so much undependable that nobody was sure of his future Such' a state of terrorism and repression could not be expected to strengthen the foundations of the State The Nawab believed in duplicity, intrigue and treachery Such important personalities as Ramnarain, Rajballabh, Naubatray, Sitaram, Saadullah, and Gurgin suffered at the hands of the Nawab It is difficult to estimate the number of smaller persons who suffered at the hands of the Nawab Everything was centralised in the hands of the

Nawab and that was bound to sap the very foundations of his government

It is pointed out that the massacre of tire English prisoners at Patna was not the worst piece of brutality Batches of Indian political prisoners were drowned in tire Ganges at Monghyr with sand bags tied to their necks According to Gentil, the Nawab defended his massacre of the English prisoners in these words "If I fall into the hands of the English, they would not spare my life I lose my government, but I have at any late this compensation that my enemies will derive no satisfaction from my fall, for I shall first of all put them all to death " The Nawab systematically oppressed the wealthy people in his realm As a matter of fact, very few monied people were left in his kingdom The officials of the late regime were made to hand over to the Nawab whatever they had accumulated Most of them were imprisoned or executed after the confiscation of their entire property It was in this way that the Nawab was able to fill his coffers The land revenue in the country was nearly doubled The result was that the condition of the peasants became very unhappy The condition of the people in general also became miserable

The Nawab suffered front all the vices of his age He did all that be could to add new recruits to his harem The result was that excessive dissipation broke down his health and even the best of the physicians could not restore it

It is said that the Nawab was absolutely unscrupulous There cannot be greater proof than the way in which he managed to bring about the deposition of his own father-in-law

The Nawab possessed a passionate and excitable ature He bec heartless bully No wonder

had hardly any friends and was hated even by his relatives, He was inwardly feared and detested by everybody

However, the Nawab was proficient in mathematics and astrology He spent a lot of money on scholars, poets and pious men He wanted to be known as a great patron of learning

It may be noted that Mir Jafar remained the Nawab, of Bengal for the second time from July 1762 to February 1765 When he died in 1765, the Calcutta Council put his second son named Najam-ud-Daulah on the throne of Bengal However, all power passed into the hands of the English Company By the arrangement of February 1765, the new Nawab agreed to maintain troops only for the support of his dignity, the maintenance of internal peace and the collection of revenues The English got the right of controlling the appointment of the officers of the Nawab At this time, the condition of Bengal was chaotic There was anarchy, confusion, bribery, corruption and extortion everywhere Such was the state of affairs when Clive came to India in 1765 as the Governor of Bengal for the second time

Clive's second Governorship of Bengal (1765-67) The period of second Governorship of Bengal of Lord Clive is remarkable for the successful handling of the political and administrative problems which confronted the Company in 1765 His masterly handling of the situation silenced all opposition and created an atmosphere of calm and quiet at least for some time

The administrative reforms were rather difficult The covenanted servants of the English Company were demoralized by the conditions under which they had been working and the facility with which they were able to make fortunes A kind of a tradition had grown

that on the occasion of every change in the government in Bengal, presents should be made to the servants of the Company On the occasion of the accession of Najam-ud-Daulah, the son of Mir Jafar, in 1765, presents were got even from the ministers The worst thing about the whole affair was that all this was done in the face of the specific orders from the Company prohibiting the acceptance of presents and requiring its servants to sign covenants agreeing not to accept them in future The servants were under the impression that as Clive himself had accepted present in the past, he would not be able to take action against them However, they were mistaken in their calculations Clive was determined to carry out the orders of the Company He forgot altogether that he himself was enjoying £30,000 a year from the Jagir Clive demanded of all the civil and military servants of the Company to enter into covenants to the effect that they would not accept presents This they did prider the impression that the zeal of Clive would cool down after some time and he would modify his own orders accordingly However, the servants of the Company found that Clive was faithful in the performance of his duties towards the Company

When Clive came to Calcutta, he found that there was a great lack of senior servants of the Company The reason was that the salaries of the Company's servants were hopelessly low and efficient persons were not available on those terms He found the junior servants in all the important jobs and making profits by selling their passes to the Indian merchants Clive found that the office of the secretary of a department was held by a writer of three years' standing The paymaster of the army was merely a writer The same was the case with the office of an accountant The intention of Low Clive was to regulate the private

trade in such a way that out of the profits, higher salaries might be given and efficient persons might be forthcoming Although Clive was, in favour of raising the salaries of the servants of the Company, he failed in his objective on account of the opposition of the Court of Directors of the Company The result was that he had to resort to some questionable methods in order to give effect to his own scheme

Salt was a monopoly of the Company and Lord Clive decided to administer the same and employ the profits arising out of it for the payment of additional Allowances to civil and military servants Out of the profits, the Governor was to receive £17,500 per annum, a Colonel in the army or a member of the Council £7,000 and persons occupying lower ranks were to get less money

The starting of a tradition company with the object of giving higher, salaries to the servants of the Company was contrary to the orders of the Company Clive was under the impression that the Company would ignore this action of his However, when the Directors came to know of it, they immediately ordered its abolition But, Lord Clive kept those orders suspended long as he was in Bengal and hoped to procure their reversal on his return to England As the Directors insisted, the Company had to be wound up According to Dodwell, "In this matter Clive had been unduly blamed His proposals amounted in reality to the continuation of the monopoly which had been customary and the assignment of the revenues so raised to the payment of establishment " Lord Clive was condemned for what Lord Cornwallis was praised later on The mistake which Clive made was probably one of tactics

There was a strong resistance to his reforms from

the servants of the Company, When Clive thundered against the rapacity and oppression universally prevalent and declared that "every spark of sentiment, and public spirit was lost and extinguished in the inordinate lust of unmerited wealth," they failed to understand as to how Clive himself was above board An association was formed by them Clive's entertainments were boycotted Memorials were prepare However, when the servants of the Company found that Clive was adamant, they submitted to their lot The result of this was that Clive was able to clear the Aegean stables of Company's establishment

Lord Clive had to deal with the military side of the administration also While doing so, he had to face a difficult situation For many years, the English Company had been trying to cut down the Bhatta or field allowances of its military officers Those allowances were made to make good the extra cost of living in the field as compared with living in garrison The origin of the double Bhatta could I traced to the Carnatic Wars where Chanda Sahib and Mohammad Ali paid Bhatta to the French and English officers Likewise, Mir Jafar paid double Bhatta to the English soldiers Mir Kasim did likewise However, when the English Company got the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa, the duty of paying double Bhatta to the soldiers fell on the shoulders of the Company No wonder, the Directors of the Company sent instructions to reduce expenditure on that account

Lord Clive prepared a comprehensive scheme in this connection The troops of the Company were divided into three Brigades each consisting of one regiment of European infantry, one Company of artillery, six battalions of sepoys, and one troop of black cavalry One Brigade was stationed at Monghyr, another at Bankipore and the third one at Allahabad

Clive laid down that the officers in the cantonment at Monghyr or Patna were to draw half Bhatta as the officers did at Trichinopoly When they took the field, they were to draw Bhatta while within the limits Bengal and Bihar, but if they crossed into Oudh, they were entitled to double Bhatta For a Captain, that amounted to three, six, twelve rupees a day

A combination was formed among the military officers to resist the enforcement of the new regulations It was decided to resign simultaneously their commissions They were encouraged to take this action by Sir Robert Fletcher However, Lord Clive was determined to crush all opposition and he carried out the new regulation He is once accepted the resignations of those who offered them and got officers from Madras to replace them Clive visited the headquarters of the three-bridges in person to assure himself that the men were under control Gradually, the officers began to quarrel among themselves and the mutiny broke down Fletcher and six others were turned out Those who were Witsidered to be not guilty were allowed to return to duty on condition of signing a three years agreement

Clive set up a fund known as Lord Clive's Fund with a view to helping the servants of the Company at the time of financial difficulty That fund performed a useful function till the time the Company adopted the system of pensioning its servants The fund was created out of the sum of Rs 5 lakhs left by Mir Jafar to be given to Clive

Dual Government of Bengal (1765-72) The system of dual Government of Bengal which was set up by Clive is not easy to explain It was not the simple division of control over the administration of Bengal between the English East India Company and the

Nawab of Bengal The position was somewhat as follows

The Nawab or Subedar of Bengal, as Viceroy of the Mughal emperor, exercised two functions (1) the Diwani, i e , revenue, and civil justice, and (2) the Nizamat, i e , military power and criminal justice As Sir James Stephen points out, the Nawab granted practically the Nizamat to the Company in February 1765 In August 1765, the Emperor Shah Alam granted the Diwani to the Company thus held the Diwani from the emperor and the Nizamat from the Subedar So far the position was clear But the difficulty was created by the fact that the servants of the East India Company as yet did not undertake their duties as Diwan or Nizam in their own person The nominal head of the administration was a Deputy Naib or Nawab whom the Nawab bound himself to appoint with their sanction A similar Deputy was appointed for Bihar But the whole administration was carried on for many years through the agency of the native servants However, in 1769 English supervisors (afterwards called Collectors) were appointed to control the native revenue officers But instead of improving matters, they only made confusion worse confounded and corruption also increased

Such was the Dual system of Government set up in Bengal by Clive It might be asked as to why it was that Clive hesitated to take over the administration of the province when he could have done that so easily The Nawab was merely a puppet in the hands of the British As a matter of fact, all power was in the hands of the British He was their creature and depended upon them for his existence Clive would have rendered a great service by abolishing his office and assuming the control of the government directly, rather than agree to play the role of the wire-puller

from behind the scene As pointed out by Dodwell in Cambridge History of India, the great disadvantage of the scheme was that it separated power from responsibility The English were given control over the province but they did not feel any responsibility for its administration and could not be held responsible for anything done badly This thin was made clear when in 1770, a severe famine broke out in Bengal The servants of the company did not feel any duty towards the people who were left to die in thousands That appalling distress can be attributed to the System of Dual government set up by Clive P E Roberts criticises the system in these words "The unfortunate divorce of power from responsibility soon caused a recrudescence of the old abuses"

But as Dodwell points out, the system as set up in 1765 had certain immediate advantages It was suited to the exigencies of the time It secured that control over the Nawab which was regarded as the most pressing need of the time It also secured protection against the complaints of the foreign powers and demands of the Home Government Clive still remembered how the ostensible assumption of power contributed to produce the unyielding opposition of the English to the schemes of Dupleix The writs of the emperor of Parwanas of the Nawab, though valueless without the support of the English power, could not be fully discounted at Paris or the Hague without a serious breach of diplomatic etiquette It was thought that something less than the assumption of full dominion would be less likely to excite legal difficulties in England to provoke the interference of Parliament, "In short, the grant of the Diwani was designed to secure the full control of Bengal affairs so far as the Company's interests went without incurring the inconvenience of formal dominion"

Lord Clive's own observations were as follows "The first point in politic which I offer to your consideration is the form of Governments We an sensible that since the acquisition of the Diwani the power formerly belonging to the Subah of these provinces is totally, in fact, vested in the East India Company Nothing remains to him but the name and shadow of authority This name, however, the shadow, it is indispensably necessary we should seem to venerate under the sanction of Subah, every encroachment that may be attempted by foreign powers can be effectively crushed, without any apparent interposition of our own authority and all real grievances complained of by them can, through the same channel, be examined into a redress But it is, therefore, always remembered that there is a Subah and though the revenues belong to the Company, the territorial jurisdiction must still rest in the chiefs of the country, acting under him and this Presidency in conjunction"

Roberts says that even Clive would not have denied the charge that the system set up by him was not perfect But he remarks that "Clive could not afford to indulge in counsels of perfection, he had to deal with actualities" He admitted that the Nawab had only "the name and shadow of authority," yet 'this name, the shadow, it is indispensably necessary that we should venerate" Verelst tells us that it was impossible to take over the full government of the province In the first place, the number of servants of the Company required for the task of administration was very limited However, they were quite ignorant of the task of administration, for they were merely writers in the Company's service

According to Dr Nandalal Chatterji, "The double government which Clive established was both illogical

and unworkable He forgot that division of power was impossible without creating anarchy and confusion The assumption of the Diwani of the Bengal Subah exhibited the cynical adroitness of an astute schemer rather than the foresight of a responsible administrator It was a selfish contrivance for enjoying the spoils of office, without taking over its fundamental obligations It was avowedly a device for hoodwinking the country Dowers and the foreign nations whom Clive did not want to give umbrage He frankly justified it as an excellent screen for concealing the political revolution in Bengal The Nawab was now a pensioner of State and had nothing but the name and shadow of authority, but Clive insisted that this name and shadow must be preserved and outwardly venerated as a convenient mask which, he thought, it would be unwise and even dangerous to throw off Diwani was therefore little more than a deceptive camouflage

"The tragic inhumanity of the dual system resulted naturally in a complete breakdown of the internal administration The Nawab had no power to enforce law and justice, while the English on their part disowned the responsibility of government The result was disorder in the country The villainy of the zamindars, and the rapaciousness of the Nawab's officials and the Company's servants knew no bounds, and the peasants, weavers and merchants were intimidated and fleeced to the utmost The people were left virtually without appeal, and many were compelled to leave their hearths and homes in despair and became vagrants or freebooters The country was, in short, reduced to a state of miserable desolution At no period in the chequered annals of Bengal did the province suffer such flagrant spoilation as it did in the era of Clive "

From 1765 to 1772, the actual administration was in the hands of two Indian officials known as Naib Diwans, the Company itself being the actual Diwan Mohammed Raza Khan was in Bengal and Raja Shitab Rai was in Bihar In 1769 were appointed British supervisors who were given a controlling, though not an immediate, power over the Collectors " The evil of the system was that while the Company itself was in serious financial straits, its servants were returning to England with big fortunes

Becher, Resident at Murshidabad, wrote thus in 1769 "It must give pain as an Englishman to have reason to think, that since the accession of the Company to the Diwani, the condition of the people of this country has been worse than it was before, and yet I am afraid the fact is undoubted The fine country which flourished under the despotic and arbitrary government, is verging towards its ruin, while the English have really so great a share in the administration "

Moreover, the Directors strongly suspected that the Naib Diwans were intercepting a large part of the revenue which would have filled the Company's treasury Hastings was appointed in 1772 definitely with a view to ending the Dual System The Court of Directors had decided "to stand forth as Diwan" He was in fact selected to take the place of the three supervisors "We now arm you with our full powers," wrote the Directors of the Company, "to make a complete reformation" Although he was given definite instruction on most points, it is to a certain extent true, as Lord Thinlow says, that he was ordered "to destroy the whole fabric of the double government—he was to form a system for the government of Bengal, under instructions so general, that I may fairly say the whole plan was left to his judgment and discretion"

Formally the abolition of the Dual Government did no more than that the Company should henceforth collect the revenues through the Agency of its own servants But in reality, it meant becoming responsible for the whole of civil administration Hastings hardly exaggerated it when he described it as "implanting the authority of the Company and the sovereignty of Great Britain, in the constitution of this country" The first step was the abolition of the offices of Naib Diwans of Bengal and Bihar, and the prosecution of Mohd Raza Khan and Raja Shitab Rai for peculation After undergoing 'a long trial and being kept in custody for rather more than a year, they were both acquitted The trial was merely a formal affair designed indirectly to remove them Although Warren Hastings was opposed to it, it served the purpose "The retrospections and examinations are death to my views," said Hastings "

Thus it was that the Dual System, which was set up by Clive, was abolished by Warren Hastings It was not intended to last for ever It was a stopgap It was a makeshift agreement which aimed at tidying over the difficulties confronting the English in 1765 It was the creation of the genius of the Englishmen who believe in bit-by-bit advance It was the policy of muddling through which, though often misunderstood, serves its purpose in the long run

Dr Nandalal Chatterji points out that Clive was the real founder of a regular postal system in British India He laid the foundations on which the modern postal system was subsequently built up by his successors The system introduced by him was mainly a continuation of the old Dak organisation of horse carriers or runners who carried letters and despatches by relays along the road from place to place All that was required was to set up a permanent and efficient

staff of runners and Clive entrusted this task to the zamindars along the postal routes They were required to supply runners to carry the mails However, they were allowed to claim deduction in their rents in proportion to the expenditure incurred by them for the maintenance of the runners

In 1766, Clive arranged for a full-fledged organisation of Daks within the Bengal province and from Bengal to other presidencies According to the new system, the Daks were to be controlled by a post-master with assistants under him The mails from Calcutta were to be despatched from the Government House Letters meant for despatch were to be sorted every night The Daks were to be sent off personally by the postmaster or his assistants Letters for different centres were to he packed in separate bags The mail bags were to be seated with the seal of the Company None but chiefs of factories or Residents were to open the bags meant for their respective areas The chiefs were to observe the same rule with respect to the letters sent down to Calcutta

The system of runners was defective and consequently there were delays in the delivery of mail bags No wonder, new regulations were framed by Clive, According to them, the mail bags were to be numbered in regular succession The day and hour of despatch and the number of the packets were to be noted on the tickets affixed to them The Resident or Chief of factory was regularly to send advice of the receipt of each packet to the Resident of the stage from whence it came last if any packets were found missing, the runners were to be punished if any one failed to give satisfactory explanation of the loss All packets were to be seated with the seal of the Governor and that of the Company with a view to preventing their being opened before arrival at the destination

It is to be noted that the postal system set up by Clive was employed only for official purposes The private individual could not make use of it

According to Dr Nandalal Chatterji, "The foreign policy promulgated by Clive and continued throughout the Diwani period was one of cautious moderation, based on a realistic grasp of the practical possibilities and dangers inherent in the situation facing Bengal on its vulnerable sides The fundamental principle underlying this policy was the avoidance of conquest and dominion outside the existing limits of the province

The defence of Bengal, itself was an arduous charge 'To go farther,' Clive maintained in one of his letters to the Directors, 'is in my opinion a scheme so extravagantly ambitious and absurd that 'no Governor and Council in their senses can adopt it, unless the whole system of the Company's interest be first entirely new-modelled ' 'The limits of the Nabob's dominions, he further argued, 'are sufficient to answer all your purposes These, we think, ought to constitute the boundaries, not only of all your territorial possessions and influence in these parts, but of your commerce also since by grasping at more, you endanger the safety of those immense revenues, a Zat well-founded power, which you now enjoy, without the hopes of obtaining an adequate advantage ' This policy was grounded on the following consideration Firstly, a distant dominion might prove to be a burden on Bengal, both financially and militarily, Secondly, hazards of war and conquest could not be conducive to the growth of the Company's trade Thirdly, aggression outside Bengal was, likely to stir up serious trouble with the country powers Fourthly, Bengal itself produced, in the words of Clive, 'all the riches we are ambitious to possess' Fifthly, a pac[illegible] [illegible]y alo[illegible]

could 'conciliate the affections of the country powers,' 'remove any jealousy, they may entertain of our unbounded ambition,' and 'convince them that we aim not at conquest and dominion, but security of carrying on a free trade, equally beneficial to them and to us' Sixthly, the security of Bengal was to be sought rather in the discordancy of the view and the interests of the neighbouring powers than in a policy of aggression against them, Seventhly, if ideas of conquest were to be the basis of English policy, Clive apprehended that the Company would, by necessity, be led from one acquisition to another Eighthly, when a sufficient number of competent English officials could not be had for the administration of Bengal itself, it was out of the question to assume the responsibility of government outside the province Lastly, Clive was aware of the fact that, owing to the enormous requirements of the Company's own trade investments, it was impossible to find money to undertake distant ways

Clive had to deal with Nawab Wazir of Oudh and the Emperor Shah Alam, Both of them were at this time in the hands of the English and were asking for favours Oudh lay defenceless before the British armies On his arrival, Clive found that Vansittart had already promised Oudh to the Moghul Emperor To Clive, it seemed to be a foolish step It would have been impossible for Shah Alam to maintain his hold over Oudh Negotiations were opened with Shuja-ud-Daula and ultimately the treaty of Allahabad was signed in August 1765 By this treaty, the Nawab Wazir of Oudh was confirmed in his kingdom with the exception of the districts of Kora and Allahabad, Chunar and the Zamindari of Banaras including Ghazipur The Nawab Wazir also agreed to pay Rs 15 lakhs as war indemnity He also entered into a

defensive alliance with the English Company by which the latter agreed to help him for the defence of his frontiers and the former promised to pay the cost of maintenance The Nawab Wazir also agreed to allow the English Company to carry on trade duty-free throughout the whole of his dominions

The result of the above provisions was that Oudh was created into a buffer State The soundness of the policy of Clive with regard to Oudh can be proved from the fact that right from 1765 to 1856 this policy was continued by the successors of Clive According to Ramsay, Muir "It was a matter of fixed policy to maintain a dose alliance with Oudh which was useful as a bulwark against the threatening power of the Marathas"

Lord Clive also made a settlement with Shah Alam The latter was given the districts of Kora and Allahabad which were secured from the Nawab Wazir of Oudh The English Company also promised to pay Rs 26 lakhs A year as tribute In return of all this, the Mughal emperor granted the Diwani of Bengal, Bihar and Orissa to the English Company

The settlement with the Mughal Emperor was criticised from many quarters It was pointed out that Lord Clive was over-generous to a political fugitive Men like Sir Eyre Coote advocated a British march to Delhi and the conquest of India in the name of Shah Alam It is true that from military point of view, such a conquest was a possibility, but Lord Clive regarded that venture to be dangerous According to him, to go further was a scheme so extravagantly ambitious and absurd at no Governor and Council in their senses could even Adopt it The soundness of Clive's judgment was proved by the fact that it was with great' difficulty that the Company was able to defend its existing

frontiers against the foreigners Had the British frontiers been extended unnecessarily in 1765, the problem of defence would have become hopeless

According to Dr Nandalal Chatterjee, "Clive had been sent out a second time specifically to reform the entire government of the Company, and to toot out the glaring abuses in its affairs there At the time of his arrival, he found the whole situation in the presidency to be unspeakably bad There was nothing that bore the form or appearance of orderly administration, and gross self-seeking appeared to be rampant among all classes of the Company's servants Luxury, rapacity and a want of principle were prevalent in every sphere Sudden and, among many, unjustifiable acquisition of riches during the recent years seemed to have totally demoralised everybody from the seniormost officials down to the writer and the ensign Corruption was universal and contagious Clive was fully cognisant of the extent and variety of the oppression which had brought a lasting reproach to the English name He himself confessed that it was impossible to enumerate the complaints that had been laid before him by the poor inhabitants of the country There was no law and order in the province, and the Nawab's government was a mere mockery The peasantry groaned under the merciless weight of taxation which drained the life blood from the land Jobbery and bribery were the order of the day, and the whole burden thereof ultimately fell on the starving cultivator The trade of Bengal was 'the unholy monopoly of the Company's servants and their gumashtahs, and thousands and, thousands of Indian traders were reduced to poverty on accounted the unashamed misuse and abuse of the privilege of the Dastak " According to the same writer, Clive was well fitted for the role of a reformer He had the resolution

of a taskmaster, the sternness of a dictator and the efficiency of a supervisor He knew how to fight opposition, and had the capacity for enforcing obedience to himself He could recognise merit and had the ability of choosing men with discrimination He was energetic, courage pus and well-balanced Bold in action, he could be cool in judgment His industry and application to business were prodigious Possessed of the qualities that go to make a good administrator, Clive was also armed with very wide powers to deal with the situation in Bengal in any way he liked "But, with all his good intentions and marked abilities, Clive lament ably failed to achieve real success as an administrator The reason is not far to seek Being unscrupulous and 'devoid of a fine moral feeling, he could not set before himself a high ideal and allow himself to be guided, always and in every matter by considerations of expediency alone He took into his consideration nothing but the immediate present, and refused to look beyond it He sought to provide for today, and he would leave tomorrow to take care of itself If he committed grave errors, it was because he was narrow and illiberal in his outlook The Company had secured a vast empire and an enormous revenue It was to be expected that these circumstances should have called for a few and radical approach, Clive, however, viewed the Company's Position from the point of view of a shopkeeper, and so he failed to recognise the fact that the people of Bengal had to be assured of good government"

Clive left India in 1767 when, he was absolutely broken in health He entered Parliament and was greatly admired to begin with However, his critics started troubling him In 1773, Colonel Burgoyne moved a resolution in Parliament that Lord Clive, "through the influence of the powers with which he

was entrusted as a member of the Select Committee and Commander-in-Chief of the British forces did obtain and possess him self of the sum of £234,000, and that in doing so the said Robert Clive abused the power with which he was entrusted to the evil example of the servants of the public and to the dishonour and detriment of the State " The resolution was not passed in this form After a lengthy debate, the following resolution was unanimously carried "That Robert Clive at the same time rendered great meritorious services to his country "

Estimate of Clive A critical examination of the work done by Clive in India shows that his services to the British Empire in India were great He was responsible for the capture and defence of Arcot in 1751 In collaboration with Lawerence, he was able to frustrate an the designs of Dupleix He learnt his soldiering from General Lawerence and his diplomacy from Governor Saunders

In 1756, he co-operated with the Marathas to put down the pirate stronghold of Ghariah By his victory of Plassey, he laid the foundations of the British power in Bengal and provided the basis for further expansion into the interior of the country During his second Governorship of Bengal, he established Oudh as a Buffer State He was not only a great warrior but also a great administrator and statesman Lord Chatham compared Lord Clive with Frederick, the Great of Prussia According to Burke, Lord Clive settled great foundations When he "forded a deep water with an unknown bottom he left a bridge for his successors over which the lame might hobble and the blind might grope their way " According to P E Roberts, in spite of his faults, there was the stamp of grandeur on all the words and actions of Clive "His headlong valour on the battlefield, his splendid daring and audacity in a

political crisis, his moral courage in facing disaffected and' mutinous subordinates, his force and fire in debate, all justified the lofty verdict of Lord Macaulay that our island scarcely ever produced a man more truly great, either in arms or in Council "

Reference may be made to two views which however, do not do justice to Clive According to Sir Charles Wilson, "There is little trace of skilful combination, in his plans, and on some occasions he appears to have neglected the most obvious military precautions To seek the enemy and on finding him to attack with headlong valour seem to have been his guiding principle, and his successes were due rather to his personal intrepidity, and to his power of inspiring large masses of men with confidence than to studied plans or dexterous manoeuvres " Horace Walpole referred to Clive in these words "Though Lord Clive was so frank and high-spirited as to confess a whole folio of his Machiavellism, they were so ungenerous as to have a mind to punish him for assassination, forgery, and treachery and it makes him very indignant "

Lord Clive who was the founder of the British empire in India, was also the architect of the ruin of the people of Bengal The corruption the oppression and the mal-administration under which they groaned for years were in no small measure due to him His lust for gold amounted to a mania which proved contagious and Bengal was rifled of its treasures by a set of rapacious adventures whom none could control, He reduced the Nawab to a figurehead, deprived him of the power and means of doing good and shirked responsibility himself There was nothing new or original in his plans, he followed in the footsteps of Dupleix and Bussy and his success was due to a fortuitous combination of circumstances and treachery

than to genius " According to Dr V A Smith "It appears to me impossible for the impartial historian to deny that Clive was too willing to meet Asiatic intriguers on their own ground, too greedy of riches, and too much disposed to ignore delicate scruples in their acquisition 'That verdict undoubtedly tarnishes his memory and precludes the historian from according to him the unqualified admiration which qualities seem to exact His most outstanding characteristic was an inflexible will which guided his conduct to success in all affairs, whether military or civil His military genius and his gift for leadership were abundantly manifested both in the Peninsula and in Bengal His abilities as a statesman were exhibited chiefly in his second administration when he confronted extraordinary difficulties with unflinching courage "

According to Lord Curzon, "Great as a captain for good judges of warfare have been heard to say that in military genius he was equal to Marlborough and superior to Turenne—greater still as an administrator and statesman for he was the real founder of that Clive Service which for more than a century and a half has been the glory of British rule in India to Clive we owe the fact that there has been an India for Englishmen to serve and for British Viceroys to govern Forgive him his errors they were great, but never mean, remember his achievements they were transcendent, shed a tear over the final scene—it was tragic but not ignoble After all, was not Clive the first of the Indian Pro-consuls to suffer from the ingratitude of his countrymen and did he not thereby inculcate a lesson and set an example that has taught others to endure?"

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